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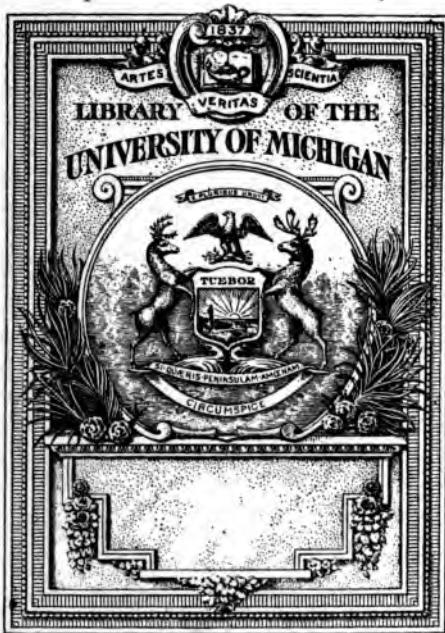
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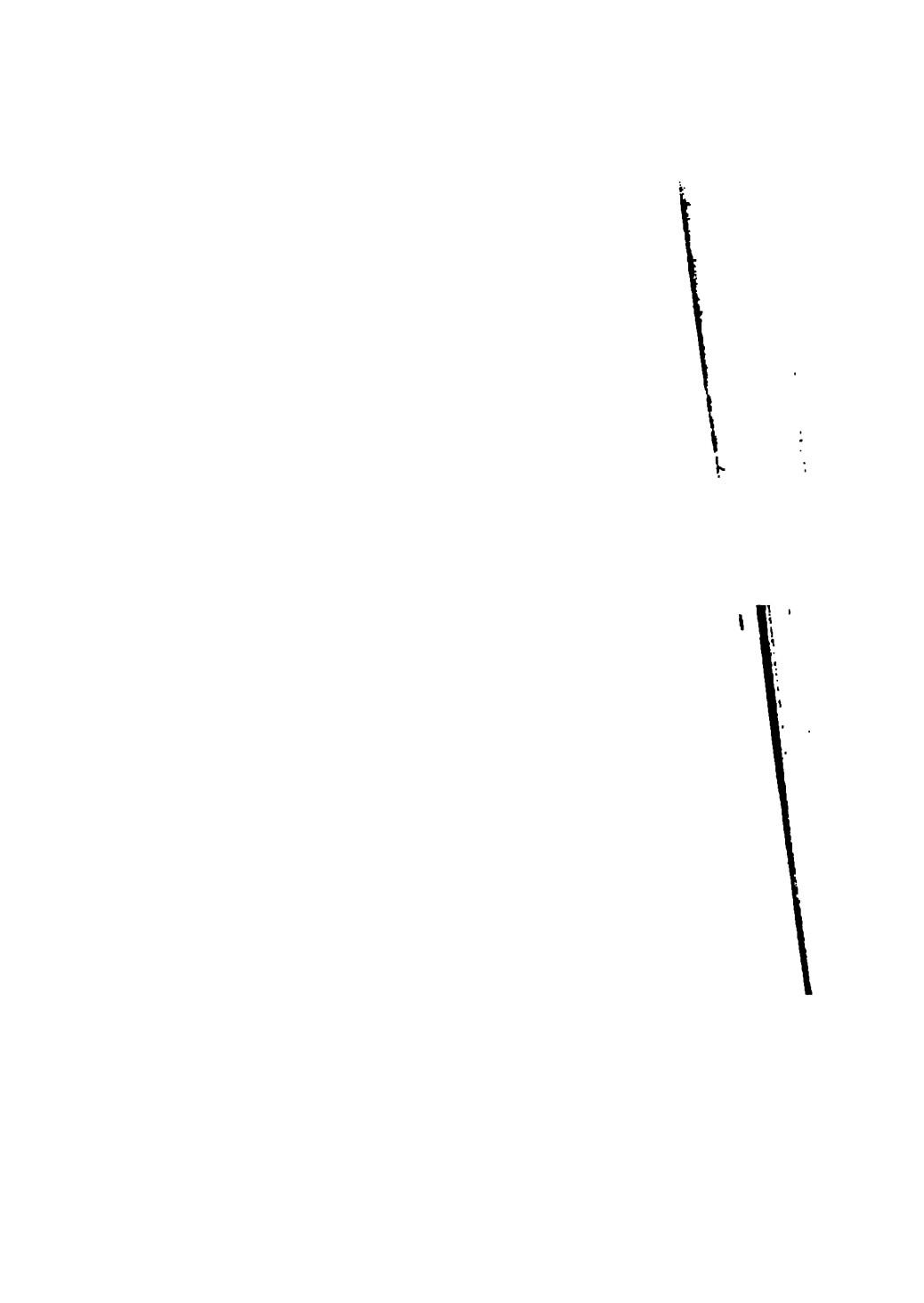
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JOHN
JEROME
JEAN INGELOW





A BOOK WITHOUT BEGINNING.

JOHN JEROME:

HIS THOUGHTS AND WAYS.



A Book without Beginning.

BY

JEAN INGELOW,

AUTHOR OF "OFF THE SKELLIGS," "FATED TO BE FREE,"
"SARAH DE BERENGER," "DON JOHN."



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A BOOK WITHOUT BEGINNING.

I.

I. No, I am willing as usual to testify that you are a charming woman, but this I will not do, though a sweeter creature never sat on a donkey which was rather small for her weight, or wore a blue veil twisted round her neck, where it was of no use in the world.— You are looking rather well to-day.

She. I am glad you think so. I like you to appreciate me.

I. Of course you do. We all like to be appreciated. I consider it probable that even an oyster, a good oyster, if he could know that he was to be eaten, would wish that it should be by one who could appreciate him. I am quite capable of sympathizing with him so far as to be certain that he would feel hurt if, when he was swallowed, it was said that he was stale. I lately read some acrostics of yours so neat and

regular that I thought they must have been "machine made." Now will that compliment satisfy you, and induce you to leave me alone?

She. Certainly not. You ought to do something for the world. It has always been agreed among us that you were far the cleverest member of our family.

I. You will allow that *that* is not saying much! Why do you laugh? This I assure you is a very serious matter.

She. I told you it was: then will you write me this book?

I. A minute ago it was *a* book, now it is *this* book.

She. Yes, I see it already. I think it has a blue cover.

I. You shall repent this! Well, if I do, as I never could write a formal opening, may I begin in the middle?

She [after a pause]. You may if you can.

I. Of course I can.

She. I should have said not. I should have said that, wherever you commenced, there would be the beginning, and that you would not attain to the middle till afterwards.

I. We shall see.

She. O, "we shall see." Now you have prom-

ised, and you know we must not disappoint expectations which we have raised ourselves.

I. No, it would be a cruel thing to promise a hungry man a dinner, and then set before him a lump of raw blubber.

She [*with gravity*]. It would indeed.

I. Unless he was a Greenlander. No man could have been more energetic, more industrious (with a butterfly net) than I. And now I have promised to idle away my time in writing a book. I fear that, when I have once joined the dangerous classes, I shall often look back with regret on these unpublished days of comparative innocence.

She. The dangerous classes?

I. The dangerous classes! So surely as the race invents a new sort of villainy, the authors hasten (by way of warning) to spread it abroad, and all our most ridiculous mistakes they first make and then disseminate. Dangerous? Yes indeed, I wonder, author as you are, that I ever ventured to sit in-doors with you. It must be use.

She. Why do you call me an author? Ridiculous!

I. Because you copied the manuscript of your grandmother's little book for her, and put mot-

toes to all the chapters. Yes, it must be use. I have become callous. Indeed, it has long been well known that you may dare the most dangerous things, such as London crossings, and tough pie-crust, if you are but used to them ; and yet you may be startled out of all propriety if a few Gatling guns go off when you think you are standing in their way.

Observing that I was roused, she said no more, but turned her donkey's head and proceeded up the lane, while I took up my butterfly net and went on. "It will have to be done !" I thought, and as I walked I cogitated as follows.

I was told a strange legend lately which bore upon this point. A certain angel was sent to collect stones in the moon and distribute them down here where fords were going to be wanted over the rivers. A sufficiently difficult enterprise ; but he went on with it well, till, drawing near the earth, he saw, as I understood, a lot of pterodactyls fluttering about in a bog, and was so much startled and astonished that he accidentally upset the bag containing the stones, and they came clattering down all over New England.

He was accustomed, no doubt, to get out of the way of a speeding planet as she came rolling

up in her oval ; a volcano seen below spreading mushroom-shaped smoke over its mouth did not put him out ; but pterodactyls heaving their long necks out of the swamp he had not been used to, he could not stand.

It was a Yankee who told me this story.

I wish to state, without any mental reservation, that I do not believe it. It does not appear to me to account in a satisfactory manner for the stones which plague the New England farmer.

In fact, I know it is a mere invention ; and this I assert for the sake of our wiser and more advanced friends, who handle every scrap of legend with reverence, and collect myths with tears in their eyes,—tears drawn forth by impassioned fealty toward—well, toward the truths (or falsehoods) thought to be enshrined in them, and toward the sacred past. This is not a solar myth at present,—at least I think not, but perhaps in time it will be.

I know one of those *savans* who, after deep study, deduced quite distinctly from an ancient myth that all men are sinners. He glowed with high appreciation when he related the fact to me. I seized his hand and congratulated him. It is tiresome to hear that same thing confidently asserted every day. It is almost enough to

make one deny it. But what one unearths for one's self appears less hackneyed. He found out that we are all sinners : so we are, and fools too, but some of us more than others. They don't often dig up such valuable truths as this.

I went a good deal into that kind of work once, myself. It seemed delightful to appeal for teaching to the youth of the race,— though to be sure we are often told that the poor things knew nothing, and were very little more than apes,— or anyhow to maxims laid up in barbaric tongues from prehistoric times ; but it takes the edge off one's pleasure, in that arduous and costly toil, to find that one can get better teaching, in plain English, for nothing, in any Sunday school ; and for two pence a week in any week-day school (for the poor) either.

Far be it from me to include the rich ; I would not take the liberty ; but I may say without fear of contradiction, that I have met with dozens upon dozens of urchins scarcely ten years old among them, who not only declared that they knew the difference between right and wrong, and fully understood that they ought not to tell lies, but could repeat the whole of the ten commandments by heart, and had a distinct notion as to the meaning of such difficult words as duty,

religion, money, gas, benevolence, telegrams, and (if you call it "spelling") orthography.

In some prehistoric times their notions on certain of these points were hazy.

"The book," she remarked, "is not to be a mere novel,—any one can write such a thing as that."

This was said when we were talking before about the middle of the book,—where, as I said, it would begin.

To this speech of hers I made answer, "O."

"It is to go on," she continued, "just as you do when you talk."

"About virtue and probity," I suggested.

"I dare say!" was her reply. "No, you are to write of the odd things you think, and the odd things you do."

What am I doing now? Nothing, I am sure, but what is most natural, most commonplace, and most laudable.

I am in lodgings in the royal borough of Windsor. I frequent these every year for about a month in order to hunt for, and, I am proud to say, occasionally to find, the larvæ of an extremely rare (and ravenous) lepidopterous insect, which the Queen preserves for me with unconscious benignity in a swamp in Windsor Great Park.

It is a remarkably noxious insect, and, by dint of persistent efforts, has been so nearly exterminated in these Islands that I and my fellow entomologists were long afraid we should have to go to the extreme east of Germany if ever we hoped to set our eyes upon it again. Having twice found a specimen, I can be calm ; but the first I discovered I wished to go with it into the Desert that I might watch it alone.

I carried it off with endearing language, and felt all the more loyal toward our gracious sovereign. She is an excellent monarch. Her grandeur affects me with almost as much pleasure as if it were my own. I hate all manner of grandeur except regal grandeur. That is most convincing and most comely.

The masses, as we often say, must have a PERSON to look at as an evidence that law lives, that order has eyes, that government — in this particular Island at least — goes to the sweet sound of martial and other music, that wholesome permanence is to be looked for, (since that which has been is,) and also useful change. The top of all awaits a change. The monarchy is theoretically immortal, but the monarch grows older among the rest.

Some fellows say that theoretically there are

higher forms of government. Probably. I have often thought so myself. But where do they hang out? I should like to see them in their working clothes. But I may remark that I should not admit young sucking governments, not two hundred years old, to give evidence in answer to this appeal. There I think I have them. Let those talk that have lasted.

For my part I should like to see our grandeur more frequently. I have said more than once that it is a pity the present sovereign has not been advised to wear the crown at all times, as the early Norman kings did. I should like to see royalty star it about among the commons in a crown as large as my hat, with the Koh-y-Nohr blazing in the midst of it. This would have a very good effect.

But nobody takes the least notice of what I say. It is the old story!

I rambled for miles in Windsor Great Park, but from a deep sentiment of loyalty (and perhaps from another motive, for we are none of us perfect) I forbear to mention the direction. If it became known, I should cease to be the envy of my peers; and all the entomologists in Europe would come with wives and friends, settle down and pitch tents round that swamp, and watch for

two pairs of wings by night and by day. There would be fighting between different nationalities for the best places. Far into the night, Germans would sing part-songs and eat "the mutual" sausage with arms round one another's waists.

But enough. It shall not be. Loyalty triumphs.

I wonder what SHE will think of this! Well, if she does not like it, she should not have made me write a book.

II.

I LEFT Windsor and went home. So did her grandmother, and so did SHE.

The question might now naturally arise, "Who is SHE?" I do not feel at present that I am in a position to answer. When SHE has read my opening words I will consider the matter. I have advanced. I have begun to write. What is the use of writing if one does not print? To print is to suppose a reader. I am sure some people will read these writings of mine some day,—and what will they think of me?

I want an interpreter to show the world such wisdom as there is in me, and that, as a friend of mine who is a tinker said of himself, "Though a' be called a vool a' have notions."

But I cannot set myself forth handsomely; and why? Because I cannot myself always make myself out.

Perhaps a poet could.

The poets interpret us to ourselves, and do a good deal of work besides,—some good and some

bad. They translate sensations, inspired by the events of life and the facts of nature, into words — “marry them to immortal” — words. These were previously shows and impressions, “not understood of the people” any more than Eskimo or Sanscrit or — I was going to say — English is ; but the common people of all ranks in life must understand something of this last, or their poets could do nothing with them, and there would be little in my argument.

They find a beauty in the long walk of life, piece its ends together orderly, and satisfy the blank surprise that waits on retrospection. They snatch those obscure and fleeting inspirations of the heart which had never shown their faces, and make them live before men forever in the golden captivity of words. They express the world to the soul.

The simplest way of uttering this we hear every day : “THAT’S IT.” When one has explained some difficult matter, and the listener says “That’s it,” he cannot say more. He understands the words and has got hold of what they signify.

No one has ever defined poetry itself so that the listener has said “That’s it;” and no one has ever so defined wit.

Poetry and wit : they are not essential to our

lives as led here; reasonable creatures could do without them; they must have been added over and above to serve for solace and for ornament.

The one reveals to man the excellent beauty and pathos of things real which he had not understood.

The other takes things real, which he did understand, and so changes them that he hardly knows their faces. It seizes hold of everything by its wrong end, and renders even our own misfortunes laughable.

Let us make the most of both, for we shall not carry either to the world whither we are tending. They come from the play of the spirit on its dust; they are the possessions of a creature made out the world and its Master.

Both are much beholden to incompleteness and yearning and tears. If man could get back to Paradise, wit would languish, and he would no more want poetry than little children do.

We are behindhand in achievement as to definitions, and many that we accept are unsatisfactory. How much "the judicious Hooker's" definition of time has been admired! "Time," he says, "is the measure of the motion of the spheres."

That it *is measured* by the motion of the

spheres is quite true, but it is not the measure itself. Though Time be taken for only an idea of the mind, it yet exists there distinct from the movements that measure it.

It has been thought of by some as a ladder whose base is in cloud, whose head is in heaven, whose steps are man's road, up which to walk is his nature and his destiny.

To all it appears as a succession of units, of which we can never have more than one at once. None can accumulate them.

We can think of that from which Time was taken as if it might be breadth as well as length; as if its Maker might have it all at once and all forever. When we get away from Time, it may be to pervade a cycle instead of to inherit a point.

But even while we have it we can think that succeeding points might yet be dealt out to us, though their measure by astral changes had long been over, and there was no day to dawn any more, nor a moaning tide to throb in the wake of the moon.

As regards poetry, I think I like an epigrammatic style best. I like Pope's poetry. If I had ever taken to the art, I should have written as he did, only, of course, a good deal better.

As regards wit, one man can hardly understand it all,—humour, drollery, sarcasm, irony, and mere fun.

And each people has its own kind of each kind. The English, Irish, Americans, Scotch, play with life, work, sorrow, language, and one another in fashions diverse and complete. Yet they have certain habits in common. It is an ordinary thing with them all, for instance, to stand on their heads, and so looking on the world, make believe that it is wrong end upward.

And if you trust any of them to dress up a potentate for a show, he will generally manage to put on the grandest robe wrong side out, and then follow with sly simpleness, to enjoy the magnate's strut.

There are certain things of which we say “It’s the way of the world,” when we really mean “It’s the way of the wits.”

They behave badly to us, but what could we do without them, or indeed what can we do with them?

If we grow rich and great they are very apt to insist on keeping house for us, to set broomsticks at the door for sentinels, wear our best wigs in the wash-house, and accommodate our coronets in the coal-scuttle; but when we grow

poor, either as persons or as nations, they are kind, and, though they still towzle our metaphors and tangle our language, there is no malice for us in their laughter any more.

Of all wit and humour written in English we remember that of the Scotchman longest, and laugh at it least. He has most wisdom and most malice.

The Irishman's is the most perfect, and the best shaded with pathos. This is what makes it so convincing ; but it is least recorded, for it belongs in general to the nature of repartee, and needs, for setting, the occasion that called it forth.

The American's is most various, and he is always unexpected. He takes the victim into his confidence, and with suave audacity gets the better of him over and over again. He is good at contrast, but his forte is the impossible.

As for the Englishman, with him we have laughed most. In sheer wit he stands behind, in humour before. The greatest humourists that have written in English have all been of English birth.

But I am prosy.

I like all sorts of wit except puns. I am quite above puns. It is well known that they are con-

sidered the least admirable of all jokes. It is said that they torture words and ill use the language. If there is one villany that makes my blood boil more than another, it is to hear of things being ill used that cannot defend themselves. How shameful it is, for instance, to whip cream or to bang Banagher! What has Banagher ever done to us that we cannot let it alone? Its howls to a sensitive mind are most distressing. Not that I have heard them.

Many people are fond of Attic Salt. For my part I like my jokes fresh. Others, again, are all for pith. I do not much care for it either in my fruit or my fun. Then there is dryness. Many jokes are as dry as a stick,— indeed, as dry as fifty sticks; but the humour of this kind is often merely in the mind of the observer. It is easy enough to prove this. As thus: a Highland laird being strangely enough out of whiskey on rent-day, handed his tenant a glass of claret and asked gravely, “Div ye like your wine dry, my good friend?”—“Na, laird,” she answered, “I aye tak’ all my drink wat.”

He should not have been without whiskey on rent-day, but there was no humour in this answer. If you laugh it is entirely your own lookout; certainly it is not to please me. However, if

I invented the anecdote, it signifies less what you do.

It is a pleasure of a peculiar kind to invent. When I was a little boy I wrote a story in a copy book, and invented for my hero a diamond as big as my fist. Finding that quite easy, and feeling that I might as well be liberal while I was about it, I next invented for him a lot of dolphins who were to live in his castle moat. I had given him the castle on his birthday. When he looked out the next morning "those faithful animals sang the following song,"—I spare you the song, but there's invention for you.

The necklaces with which I loaded his sister were superb. To the liberal and inventive mind what are a few bucketfuls of diamonds more or less?

It is singular how much a Scotch dialect gives point to a canny speech. English provincial dialects do not. A respectable woman, who was the wife of a very small farmer in the West of England, said to me lately of the aforesaid farmer: "My master be so mean, he be, that he d' grudge the very rooks their worrms. 'I be well rid o' the worrms, 't is trew,' he says, says he, 'but the noisy thriftless varlets doo'n't know

that ; an 't hurts my feelings to think they 'd pick 'em out full as keen, they would, if they stood me in twopence a quart,' he says, says he." If that was put into a good racy Scotch dialect it might almost provoke a smile.

But I have not time for more of this trifling. Let me proceed to what is important and necessary,— to worms of nobler breed.

I said this, of course, to myself.

When I discourse with myself, as we all so frequently do, I consider it natural and interesting to let the remarks take the form of dialogue.

But as we should cultivate good manners toward every one, I always make Myself treat Me with proper respect. In fact he often says Sir.

I call him Jack.

I occasionally give a slight provincial accent to the rejoinder made by Myself, but I never let him leave out the *h*; there I draw the line. I always keep the upper hand of Myself.

[To the reader.] You will find the person who speaks indicated; this will make it more easy for you.

I proceeded to the loft where my silk-worms are feeding and chose twenty of the finest, which I placed in a delicate open basket on some leaves of the mulberry.

When I had arranged them I observed to myself that I must take an umbrella to shade them from the sun, carry them to my estate, and settle them on my mulberry trees. "After which, Jack," I continued, "we shall have to go and see how the young ailanthus trees are getting on. It is troublesome, no doubt, to have to walk half a mile out of the way in order to reach the brook while avoiding the village, and it is still more troublesome, having filled a watering pot, to carry it to the trees and find that it does not contain enough water for them all and that therefore it must be filled again; but this duty must be performed (till the reader is ready to take it off our hands), or we shall certainly lose some of them this hot dry weather."

Myself. You are quite right, sir; you always are.

I. For the ailanthus is not an indigenous tree. And there are those which I have surreptitiously stuck in here and there in other people's hedges and woods. They must be looked after, or they will die and imperil the scheme. Considering how much we expect of the reader, it is but fair that we should do our part thoroughly.

Myself. Don't you think this is rather ab-

rupt, sir? I would keep the ailanthus in the background if I were you, lest he should be alarmed.

I. You must remember, Jack, that this is no ordinary reader.

Myself. Certainly not! I remarked his courtesy and interest at once; but I thought he might kick over the traces if you demanded much of him on such a short acquaintance.

I. It is true that I thought at this moment I heard him exclaim with energy, "What is the fool of a fellow driving at now?" but I regard this as flattering. It shows that his attention is arrested.

Myself. And I can distinctly hear him asking already what the ailanthus is.

I. Then mind you answer with deference! Begin "courteous reader," and bear in mind that he will have a good deal of trouble, in all human probability,—trouble as fruitless as it will be vexatious,—before he has done with us.

Myself. Courteous reader, the ailanthus is a tree resembling an ash in growth and leaf, but its leaves are vastly larger; they surpass those of the common staghorn in size. It is a native of Japan, and grows wild in the northern island. It is already acclimatized here, may be seen

growing in the gardens at Kew, and might be cultivated very well in any part of the South of England, probably of Ireland. It is the natural food of a certain species of wild silk-worm. It is therefore probable that wherever the tree will grow the worm will thrive.

I. Enough.

The conversation thereupon terminated, and at that moment my friend F. met me, rod in hand.

"What are you after now?" he inquired.

I had a large watering pot on one arm, and was holding up an umbrella with which I shaded my basket of silk-worms. "Why, at this moment," I answered, "I am wondering how I am to get over the brook."

"Jump it," he replied. "You are not a fat old fellow like myself, but long and lean. Put your spectacles in your pocket and jump it, Jack!"

This said brook is a capital trout stream; for a certain distance it goes through my friend F.'s land, and he spends a good deal of time fishing up and down it.

"That would be all very well," I replied, "if I had only my own legs to consider; but look here, I should jerk all these out into the water,"

and I showed him the sleek cream-colored worms.

"The wretches!" he exclaimed, "I can almost hear them chew. How they are walking into the leaves!"

I threw over the watering pot, left my basket with my friend F., and jumped across. He then handed me the property over on his fishing rod, calling after me: "I know well enough why you will not go through the village! It's a half holiday, and the children run after you calling out, 'There goes the catch 'em alive O.'"

I answered blandly that he was right. I am almost always right myself, and other men by comparison are so but seldom. When this is the case I take pleasure — the more pleasure — in acknowledging it.

But now I will have my revenge, a kindly revenge of course.

He is a very good fellow, stout and rather irascible. One day he ran panting up to the stream, which is much too wide for him to jump, and cried out to a youth on the other side: "Hi! Hi! If you fish in this stream you'll catch it!"

"You mean catch *them*, don't you?" said the youth, eying him blandly. "You should le

to speak correctly, dear Sir Unknown. Yes, no doubt I shall catch *them*; it's what I came for. I have caught five already." With that he shouldered his wallet and strolled away whistling.

On that occasion F. put himself into a passion and shouted after the lad that he only wished he could get at him. I am glad he could not; it might have been unpleasant for the lad,— and perhaps for him too.

I must admit that he is rather an irascible fellow, which is a pity, but he is very open-handed both with money and advice.

And now, as I have already reached the gate which leads to my estate, I feel called upon to make a few observations.

There is nothing so dear as dirt. I bought an acre and three perches of it lately, so I ought to know. The proverb, "As cheap as dirt," is no doubt a specimen of that playful contradictitiousness in which our forefathers loved to indulge.

"Stick to the land," some people say, "and the land will stick to you." This acre and these three perches constitute my estate, and I may say it is the stickiest estate a man ever owned.

I used at one time to be afraid I should bring the whole of it away and bestow it on my neigh-

bours, so much of it stuck to my boots when I went to visit it; but a layer of clay, as I find, is thick. I have not nearly carried it all off yet; and I cannot but feel sure that when it is gone there will prove to be *something* under it, though far be it from me to dogmatize as to what that something may be.

Partly that I might not waste my substance (otherwise my dirt), I had it planted after it had been lying fallow for a year. I thought the crop would, as it were, thatch it. I can now walk upon it much more economically; for though the crop, as it seems to me, will hardly be worth gathering in, it keeps the clay down, and I don't want to be always giving it away.

If one invests in dirt, one naturally looks out to get the dirtiest sort; for one is a landowner just the same, and taxes have to be paid for mere gravel, though that sort will not stick to its owner at all.

Thus you see the crop, if of no other value, will prevent waste. At this moment, as I approached the mulberry trees, walking over it, I congratulated myself on the fact.

I never could take any pleasure in waste. Now there was the Doge of Venice. That dropping of a ring into the sea was very wasteful, and is therefore painful to an economic mind.

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You must know, courteous reader, that the common silk-worm of commerce has been so long accustomed to the presence and the tendency of man that it has become not only tame—that is, fearless of and indifferent to his presence—but also very helpless and tender. The silk-worm, as we at present know it, shows hardly any activity, no intelligence, and a carelessness about its own life and health very aggravating to man, who takes so much pains about them.

If you placed a few caterpillars of the cabbage butterfly or the common peacock butterfly in a loft with some leaves to eat, they would apply themselves to business, and when they had finished the leaves they would speed all over the place in search of more. If the sun poured down on them they would walk into the shade.

Treat a silk-worm in the same way and, when he has devoured his leaves, you will find him sitting up with his head in the air, not stirring from his place, but insanely cursing you in his mind; for so I interpret the attitude. If the sun blazes down on him he makes no remark, but departs this life, and never troubles himself to consider that a second and even a third state of life is expected of him, of which it is mean to defraud his benefactor.

Now I desire to see the silk-worm more independent. I don't care to know that he is not afraid of the enormous eyes of man, those eyes which inferior creatures ought to fear. He is a singularly selfish worm, and manifestly eats my leaves entirely to please himself and without the least thought of my advantage. I wish to teach him to take the responsibilities of life on himself, for I think this would make him more hardy; and to this end, during the few fine weeks of the English summer, I carry some healthy worms to my trees, pay a little urchin to keep off birds, and leave them to find out that they must take care of their own interests. It is to be the same as with other colonists ; they are to have everything they want and I am to protect them besides.

The year before last a thunder-storm foiled me. The worms were such fools that they would not leave off feeding to shelter themselves, and it is well known that the glare of lightning on their bodies often causes their death.

Last year I tried again, and again beheld myself foiled, for search as I would, after what is called their last "sleep" not one of the worms could be found, and yet two or three must needs not only have lived to spin their cocoons but

they must have come forth, when I was not looking, and have laid their eggs; and some of those eggs must have survived the winter, for this spring there being a very warm week, as there always is in the month of May, I chanced to be looking at my trees,—and behold, there were some little black infants crawling on the leafless budless boughs.

Metaphorically, I tore my hair. There were no lettuce leaves that I could procure for them within four miles. A cold night came on, with drenching rain. The next morning early I returned to the tree; not a worm remained.

They would not wait for the lettuce; perhaps they could not.

Some had been drowned. The birds had disposed of others. I had succeeded with my experiment, and yet for want of more vigilance it had, notwithstanding, failed.

III.

IF one cannot have success, the next most agreeable thing is failure.

Yes, that is my decided opinion; and if the matter is properly set before you (whoever you may be), you will find that it is your opinion also.

For the next best thing in this world to being able to get what one naturally and inevitably wishes for, is the being able to have a good try for it. The truly unpleasant events are those which are past trying for. Where there can be striving there can be hoping. If that ends in failure one can sit down and rest and say, "Well, at least I have done all I could." As for me, I generally fail; and I say, on looking back, "At least I have had the trying."

You should endeavour to get that notion well into your head,—that is, if you are English. (If you are American and live in New England I will tackle you afterward.) Well, as I was saying, you should endeavour to get that notion well

into your head; because, as regards the particular experiments I am now making and failing with, I can only say that if you think they are nothing to you, you never were more mistaken in your life!

There is a certain thing that I want you to do. You will either do it, or we shall fall out—we shall fight. Which will win remains to be proved. Let me tell you a little story bearing on that point.

Once upon a time the moon heard say that the earth had fatter plains and richer hills, and was far more beautiful than herself. She thought she should like to get her. Accordingly one fine night, when she was at the full, she cast down two exceedingly large anchors, and, when the earth was fast to them, tried with all her might to drag her up; and she could n't! Now what do you think was the reason of that? Do you think it was because the earth is much the biggest and weightiest of the two?

I should n't wonder.

You and I are at the present moment made fast to one another. Now consider, in your own mind, which of us is most like the earth, and which most like the moon; and if you decide the matter as I have done already, you may not

merely spare yourself the trouble of trying to draw me, but also the notion that you can get away from me. You must be obedient to my drawing. What do I hear you say? that *you never met with such a ridiculous fellow in your life?*

You may depend on it that when people make themselves ridiculous on your account they always expect something of you in return. Now what are you tugging for? Do I hear you say that you cannot think what I mean; and that, even if you could, *the thing* is not worth a serious thought; also that, if it was, other fellows ought to try it and not you?

IT, yes indeed, *it*. So you do know what I am driving at then!

Here I wish to make an elementary remark or two to both of you, English and American. You are aware, dear sirs, that our race,—and I will be so kind as to include even those who are not Anglo-Saxon,—the race of man, I will say, mainly requires for its material welfare three things, shelter, food, and clothing.

Now shelter, once provided, lasts a good while, but food has an aggravating knack of constantly needing renewal; and as to clothing, even the wealthiest of us are frequently heard to say that they have “nothing to wear.”

But clothing has one fine quality over food ; we might have almost as much more of it as we chose, and at vastly less cost. Men must rear our wheat and tend our cattle, and they must be paid for it ; but children might feed the worms that would spin us silk gowns and vests out of their own bowels,— the said worms costing nothing for their food, and the said children's time being valueless also.

Therefore all this talk of yours will not go down with me. You know as well as I do that, as you are Squire hereabouts, I want you to plant the *Ailanthus glandulosa* in that sheltered spot at the back of your shrubbery. As you are the vicar of this parish, I want you to set it in that hedge which divides your vicarage garden from the lane, or on that waste patch at the back of your cucumber frame, or, in short, anywhere else that you think would suit it.

What a fool you are !

So I am ; and yet perhaps I may be wiser than — Eh ? What do I hear you say, — *that you are very charitable to the poor ?*

But we have no business to suffer so many poor.

You visit at the hospitals and at the poor-house ?

My gentle reader,—for I perceive that one of you is of the gentler sex, and a charming specimen of it too,—we ought not to want any poorhouses.

I am profane, am I ; “*The poor shall never cease out of the land.*”

Never ! but the poor ought not to be more than one to fifty, instead of which they are fifty to one.

The common silk-worm will not eat the leaves of the Ailanthus glandulosa ?

Certainly not ; that is why I have no patience with the common silk-worm. He has every fault that a worm can have, excepting that he is so abominably industrious. He is subject to early hatching before any of his leaves are out, to fatal panics when it thunders and lightens, to a watery spot that makes an end of him if he is too hot, to a wizening and a withering of himself if it is too cold, and to several other diseases supposed to be the effect of over civilization combined with want of intelligence.

Then what am I aiming to do ? To make him an uncommon silk-worm,—to develop his intelligence, to modify his habits ?

I should very much like so to do,—just as my old doe rabbit would no doubt like, if she could,

to develop herself into a hare ; but though she has one game leg already, I do not believe, whatever Darwin may say, that she will ever manage it, "and I hope that's grammar ;" as my friend the tinker said, when he had declared to the village choir-master how it stood to reason that if there was such a thing as a G-sharp there must be such a thing as an H-sharp too. "And that's your opinion, ain't it, my pretty Jane ?" he shouted to his better half who was a little deaf. She smiled and nodded.

I have a reasonable mind, and have long been convinced that you cannot take from a man anything that he hasn't got. (This remark applies equally to a woman, or to a worm.)

How could he get her opinion ? She had none.

She was stalwart, and had fists like a navvy. He called her pretty, using the word doubtless in a metaphorical sense, as in fact it is well accustomed to be used,—by a Londoner, for instance, when he says "Here's a pretty go," or by a gypsy when he calls a policeman "the pretty hangman."

No, my gentle reader, "I wish you all joy of the worm" if you care to undertake his education. But indeed "there is no goodness in the worm," I want to give him up for a better.

You never heard of any other silk-worm, either better or worse?

That is a pity ; your education has been neglected. There are several sorts of wild silk-worms in your own country, their only defect being that the quantity of silk they spin is so small that it is not worth collecting. The caterpillar of the oak-eggar moth is one of these ; those of the emperor and the night-peacock moths are others.

Many moths spin a little silk, but some make their cocoons valueless by twisting in morsels of leaf or bark. The burnet moth spins silk of peculiarly strong fibre, but she sticks it together with a kind of gum which makes it impossible to wind.

But there is a wild worm which feeds on the Californian lilac tree, and also on a native oak in that clear and sunny clime ; and in the Northern Island of Japan, in a climate more cold, more wet, and altogether more rigorous than ours, lives an obliging, hardy, industrious, prolific silk-worm which gets its living and spins its cocoon among the leaves of the Ailanthus glandulosa.

I should like to take to my heroics here. I know how ; but you must take that for granted.

"The country is much bigger than London." I quote from an essay written by a little street Arab at a board school. "There are no streets in it. The water is not laid on, and there ain't any modern conveniences of omnibuses and such ; but plums and cabbages grow there, and potatoes." So could the *Ailanthus glandulosa*, if you would plant it.

Where are you to get the Ailanthus glandulosa ?

You can buy it at a good nursery garden at about eighteen shillings a dozen. It is like the nightingale in one respect, that it does not flourish north of the Trent.

You have a nice garden ; it is situated south of the Trent. There is no squire in your parish. You are a great comfort to the parson. You act, so far as you can, as Lady Bountiful. You give a good deal of your time to the parish (in fact you make an occupation of it) and you know how to spend a small sum to the best advantage. Every Monday you visit the schools. Every Wednesday you go and see the poor in their houses. On Saturday you stay at home in the morning and receive the pence of the poor which they pay into the shoe club.

Of your own proper bounty you add one penny

in the shilling to their savings. Oh how precious is the penny, and of how small value their time! Some of them walk a mile fifty-two times for fifty-two pence. (Of course, when you are away your maid collects the pence.)

Now I should like to ask you a question,— such a simple one that even our cat could answer it if she had the least turn for metaphysics. It is this: Which would be worst off if your ministrations should cease,— the parish, or you?

I cannot tell what you think. *I* think *you* would. The material good, the pence, the doles of tea, the little gifts of flannel, of coals, of medicine, are spread over so many households that none would lose much; but your loss would be a moral one,— you want the parish. You think all this helps you heavenward, my fair friend. By means of poor bodies you look to improve your own soul and satisfy your conscience.

Self-denial is no doubt good; but then one naturally looks to choose one's own sort.

Now if you were to encourage cottage industries with all your might, if you were to grow quantities of that “tree of heaven,” the ailanthus, and if you were to have that empty loft over your stable cleaned out, and, while the young trees were growing, if you were to teach the vil-

large children to watch, feed, and tend the common silk-worm, and to make their parents believe in the virtues of a worm to be introduced to them so soon as there were leaves enough to feed it, you would *perhaps* be doing a good action, a real one.

You would be almost sure at first to fail ; and only think how improving that would be for you, it would make you feel so beautifully humble.

All your friends, gentle and simple, would laugh at you if you did fail ; but on the other hand you might be happy enough to set on foot a cottage industry, and cottage industries are what in England we have lost of late, to the deep disadvantage of our people. The spinning-wheel has disappeared from the poor man's house. Our poor women no longer knit stockings ; the loom has taken that industry from them. Much straw for bonnets is plaited now by machinery. Manufacturers gather people together and make them work away from their homes. Let us have industries for them at home, and especially for their children.

We must begin with the children. I wish to speak with all respect of the English cottage dame. She is virtuous, frugal and industrious, she

will work hard, but she hates what she calls "nattling." She hates delicate small attentions to rule,—careful handling of creatures that she despises. She does not like to exercise her intelligence on daily and not difficult cares. She will stand at the washtub all the morning ; but if you asked her to feed a trayful of silk-worms five times a day, and to keep the loft or lean-to, where they dwelt, shaded from sun as the sun came round, and shut up from rain if the rain came round, she would probably tell you that she did not like such nattling work. She would rather do a day's cleaning at the farm, or even gather peas for farmer Hodge in the field. In this respect she contrasts unfavorably with the Frenchwoman.

It is the children that we must look to.

Children are the greatest plagues in life. It is only the best and cleverest of us that can get the better of them, for they are cunning and not to be deceived ; and yet, as all the future is theirs, it is well worth while to lay one's self out to please and influence them, for it is a singular fact that many a man who, but for his children, might have every comfort, is fond of them to such a degree that he actually glories in denying himself for their sake.

And even I, who have none, would always rather do them a kindness than not, when it comes in my way. It is of no use arguing on this subject. That most people are fond of children is an ultimate fact, and there we must leave it.

But if you cannot govern children you can go about with them. I often get a rise out of them so. Only two or three weeks ago, there being a convenient loft over a certain stable belonging to my friend F., I took it from him; I do not mean by violence, but in a proper manner.

I let him know that I wanted to bring a dozen noisy, playful, troublesome, village children constantly about his yard. I said they would set paper boats afloat on his pump trough, tease his dogs, come furtively round and peep in at his windows at all times; that they would make friends with his puppies, and decoy them out to play with them in the road; that they would litter his place with leaves, etc.

If I had tried to persuade him that I was to do him a benefit by introducing the little urchins, I might have found some difficulty, because he would have argued with me. As it was, he gave way like a lamb.

He agreed with me that if we want to do

some fine thing for those we live among, now is our time to give and theirs to receive.

Their admired patience is not a quality warranted to keep, and for us there is no potting and preserving of opportunity. Like a jargonelle pear, it must be waited for and enjoyed that hour when it is ripe. Opportunity once let slip can no more be caught than you can catch a flying dream when some one wakes you, and cram it under the pillow to pull it out and go on with it when you settle to sleep again.

But, as I have said, my friend F. lent me the loft, and I gave out that I had some wonderful caterpillars which wanted feeding with great care,—that I would give a halfpenny a day to a certain number of children for feeding them; and that they must do this in gloves of my providing, for that the food required was the leaf of the stinging nettle.

I see no good in deceiving you, my reader, or I would do it with pleasure. The caterpillar was that of the common nettle-tortoise-shell butterfly.

I selected forty of the caterpillars, and met the children with the leaves in F.'s loft. I explained that they must use care and nicety in the feeding. Thinking the creatures were rare, and

supposing that they had cost money, they declared they would. It soon went about in the village as a fact that the gentlemen of the British Museum "were out" of that sort of thing, and that I had got the eggs from foreign parts, and was to have good money for the butterflies.

Things went on well for some days, when, as I sat at breakfast one morning, cracking the modest egg, I saw the whole troupe running up the garden helter-skelter, and a Malay lad whom I employ — my "Native" they call him — peeping at them through the glass door which he had already shut against them. But they were urgent; they shouted, they knocked, and then they turned and ran round to my open window, and without more ado burst in out of breath, and some of them sobbing.

"What's the matter?" I exclaimed.

The foremost, a girl nine years old, burst into tears. "I was very kind to mine," she sobbed.

Then followed the chorus: "They've done for themselves, they have."

"It is n't our fault."

"I did nothin' unkind to mine, but pricked my fingers ever so for 'em, — and Fanny, she knows it's true!"

"Oh, sir!"

"Well, now, what is it? Don't all talk at once!"

"Let Dick tell it then; he saw it first, he did."

Dick, thus thrust into notice, opened his round eyes and rubbed his flaxen curls aside.

"You won't never believe it," he began, and chuckled. "He raised himself and swelled and then he bursted his back right up, his own self; and I saw him get himself out of himself, and creep right away. And he's soft, and he's weak, and we think he's done for."

Chorus again.

"That's it!"

"So did mine!"

"Mine's trying it on. He means to do it soon."

"And mine has left his old eyes behind him; and please, sir, it's not our fault,—and will you come and look at 'em?"

There was a pot of strawberry jam on that breakfast table, also a loaf of bread. I cut slices from the loaf, daubed them with the sweet stuff, and handed them round myself; for my Native was looking at the village children with supreme contempt, as if the lowest English child—but I had better not pursue that theme.

I preceded them to the loft, and there let them know that I was by no means surprised at what had taken place. I took occasion to explain what wonderful creatures these were ; and further to impress them I used certain mongrel Latin and Greek names freely till, observing that the assembly looked scandalized, I was obliged to explain that I was not swearing.

After this, doling out the stipulated halfpence I dismissed the company. Attention was now excited to these remarkable "worms." Various village fathers and mothers mounted the loft and gazed at the "critters" that evening.

But mark what happened next ! It shows what children are,—not children such as my Malay boy once was, but English children.

Some evenings after, I met Dick in the lane, and he confronted me with a certain steadiness. "Well, Dick," said I, "how are the worms?" They always called them the worms.

"Dunno," said Dick.

He was untying the corner of a blue pocket handkerchief.

"I've brought yesterday's money back," he said rather sulkily, and counted a lot of half-pence into my hand.

"What for ?" quoth I.

"The worms are no good. There's lots lik
'em in the lane."

"What then?"

"We won't wait on 'em any longer. We've
chucked 'em away."

IV.

AND SHE (for something more must really be said about her), SHE having received the foregoing chapters, tied with a piece of string, by the hands of my Malay boy,—she met me the next morning in her grandmother's garden, as I was about to pay my respects to that venerable personage (greeting her by the name of Aunt, which relation she, in point of fact, bears toward me)—she met me, stopped short, burst into a laugh, and exclaimed, “O Jack, what a goose you are!”

“I am at a loss, madam,” I replied, “as to what may be the meaning of your language. I perceive no pertinency in it when addressed to myself.”

Thereupon she laughed again, and sat down on a little green bench under the ailanthus trees which I had planted some years previously. “I do not mean to say that your manuscript is not droll,” she observed. “Grandmother laughed a good deal when I read it to her; but who could

have supposed that you would write such a thing as that?"

"Katharina," I answered, "when a man, yielding to an original inward and irresistible impulse, takes pen in hand and, unknown to any one, pours forth his soul in song, or in the other thing (for the kind of composition makes no difference), and when, with the natural shyness of genius, which ever longs not only for expression but for sympathy, he confides the manuscript to one whom he has always regarded as a woman and a first cousin once removed, and she takes to laughing at him, it hits him rather hard, and I regret to say that if he is of tender age it is likely to shake his faith in human nature."

"But he is n't," was her somewhat inconsequent answer; and then she added: "I wish you would not make me laugh. It gives me a stitch in my side. Just as if any one could possibly take an interest in the ailanthus tree. I wanted you to write a book that could be published and that people would read."

I answered in a threatening tone: "I shall expect people to read my work, and if they won't, to know the reason why. And I shall certainly publish it when I have finished it."

"O no, you will not," she replied. "I know better than that!"

"Madam!" I exclaimed.

"You wrote it to punish me for having teased you when we were at Windsor, and to make grandmother laugh; but you will not publish it, because you go out of your way to make yourself appear perfectly ridiculous in it. You could not possibly publish such —"

"Such what?"

"Well, such nonsense."

I replied in a tone of mild reproof: "I have frequently, from time to time, borne testimony to your agreeable qualities; in fact I may confess, Katharina, that your presence has for many years been to me as a large pat of butter spread upon the dry bread of life; but I believe I must add now that since the day when you made me an offer of marriage you have never astonished me so much."

She was gathering some bushy flowers, for she had risen from her seat and we were proceeding to the house; but when I spoke she made as if she would blush, and looked quite out of countenance.

"I really think you might let that old story rest," she faltered; and she took on the air of blushing again.

"Why should I let such a good story rest," was my rejoinder, "specially when this is your birthday, which must needs recall the occasion?"

Thereupon I wished her many happy returns of the day, and she thanked me and said, "Only think of my being six and twenty."

"Six and twenty is a very interesting age," I replied, "and so, for a man, is six and thirty." I am exactly ten years her senior. "And what there is, in the familiar fact of your having made me an offer, to cause this confusion," I continued, "can only be known to yourself; for though I promptly declined it, I have certainly liked you better ever since you did it."

She laughed. "There is nothing in the circumstance to make me blush," she answered, "nothing at all, as you very well know."

"Then why did you do it?"

"I think because your ridiculous talk about publishing made me feel as if we were not alone — as if, almost, you had already done it and everybody was laughing at me. How completely people are at one another's mercy, Jack. How much we are in one another's power."

"That is a great discovery to come of a small occasion."

"I appeared to see myself in print as I am

shown in that manuscript,—seated on a very small donkey, and vainly trying to make him go."

"Having your old green gown on. Yes, and so in print you will appear. Well, it cannot be helped; you will bear it well. You have always been conspicuous for wisdom." This fiction has been kept up between us since the day when she remarked to me, in her childhood, that unless all my teeth were wisdom teeth she could not think how I came to be so wise. Could any thing be done to her, she inquired, to make hers grow equally wise? I replied that I considered her a wise child already.

"He says he really means to publish that manuscript," she exclaimed, as she and I entered the small morning-room, where sat a small gentlewoman with small twinkling eyes and an air of sharpness and critical intelligence.

"I am glad to see you, aunt," said the author of this book.

"Yes," she replied, "I don't doubt it; you like to see me because you know you do your duty by me, and that I think so."

The tone was sharp, though the words were kind.

She suffers greatly from dyspepsia, and it is

good for her digestion to be made to laugh ; so I always make her laugh when I come to see her, and when away I frequently send her a joke by telegram, which attention she likes.

“ Well,” she continued, “ now I have had the trouble of listening to all that nonsense of yours, I may as well hear the rest of it.”

“ No, indeed ; let us rather talk of something more improving.”

“ Improving !” she replied. “ I never would have believed that you would have written thirty pages of foolscap on purpose to show an old woman and a young one what a lot of nonsense there was in you. But have those children really thrown out the caterpillars ?

“ Really.”

“ And there was my dear Milly so thankful for the few halfpence they earned. Four children of hers in your plot ; and, by what I heard, it paid their schooling. My heart aches for her, poor dear ! ”

Milly was a favorite maid of hers who had some years previously married in the village.

“ I do not doubt it, aunt. I know your heart is as tender as the undercut of a prime sirloin of beef. But there is no schooling to pay for this week, on account of Whitsuntide ; and passing

by the school I found it as quiet as an extinct volcano."

"Dick might have known better; however, he is but young."

"Yes, he is young. Boys generally are young; it is a way they have."

"Well, tell us the rest of it."

"I perceived a certain nobleness in the action of these children. They discovered that they had been tricked, and that the work for which they were paid was of no use to me whatever. Their youthful dignity was hurt. They were indignant. Indignation is a quality that I admire. I stopped and talked to Dick, told him that he and his friends had indeed been tricked, but that all children always were tricked for their own advantage, and that in course of time, he, too should trick his. That seemed to comfort him. I took him indoors and showed him a picture alphabet, letting him observe how the letters were made striking and amusing to the child by the illustrations. Before he had forgiven me he had foreseen the joy he should have in tricking an unborn generation. I asked him whether, without any trouble to himself, he had not learned a great deal about worms from being tricked into feeding them. He said he had. I

said he was now wise enough to be trusted to feed silk-worms,—worms of merit, whose silk was worth money; but that if he undertook them he must do it for nothing. He replied with fervor that he would. So I tricked him again by remarking, with that simplicity which distinguishes me, that he was never to take more than five—mark that!—more than five of the other boys and girls up into the loft to look at them at the same time. By this restraint I have awakened their curiosity. The loft has constantly five children in it, and I have given out that next year they shall all have as many worms as they can feed."

"It will not answer," said my aunt. "The silk-worm cannot be profitably reared in this country, as has been abundantly proved."

"No, it will not answer till we can get the ailanthus tree forward enough to make it worth while to import the wild Japanese worm. But," I continued, observing a weary expression spreading over her face, "I must not forget that you consider this a tiresome subject. You do not care about worms 'in the abstract,' as you lucidly explained to me the other day, any more than you consider how piteous it was that Iphigenia should have been sacrificed, or than you trouble

yourself as to how much Ajax may have been ashamed."

"No," said my aunt, rather complacently than otherwise, "I have no patience with the classics, or with your theories either."

Then Katharina said, "Jack, when you were writing those chapters, did you intend to describe yourself, or some other man?"

I exclaimed with natural astonishment: "I wrote what I felt; therefore, to the *intelligent* reader, those chapters must contain a vivid, though it may be a partly unconscious, portrait of myself."

"Well, I *said* you meant it for yourself; but you do not appear much like that to me."

There was something dispassionate enough in her tone to take the edge off my desire to contradict her.

"Nor to me," observed her grandmother. "You are not half such an oddity as you make out. However, none of us know what we look like to other people."

"That is true," I retorted; "and I had no thought of portraying myself at all, much less of making an exhaustive portrait. I have never so much as mentioned, for instance, that I am lame, that I limp."

"If you tell that to the indulgent reader, whom you pretend you are going to have, you had better tell him also how you came to limp," said Katharina, "or he may not find out how becoming the limp is to you."

Man is an animal who loves flattery almost more than he loves a pipe. I thought her voice was rather sweet, and was silent,—probably because I meant her to go on.

"I could make a better portrait of you, myself!" she continued.

"You could n't!" exclaimed her grandmother. "A man can draw a woman's character, but a woman can never draw a man's,—to make anything of it."

"I could," persisted Katharina; "and I could tell that story too, but not on glossy note-paper of course. You would have to give me two or three sheets of that nice straw-foolscap of yours, Jack."

"Nonsense!" said her grandmother, almost sharply; and added, "what are you about now, my dear?"

"Why, grandmother," said Katharina, who, standing on a footstool, was setting a jug of tall flowers upon a bracket, "you know you do not like to see this damp stain on the wall, so I have

covered it—partly with the bracket that I put up yesterday, and partly with these bushy flowers that I've gathered."

"Ah! you've hidden it, but the stain is there just the same."

Katharina did not seem to care much for this critical remark. "You'll soon forget it, grandmother," she replied, "when it is not conspicuous —only—"

"Only what?"

"I think the bracket's coming down."

"I wish you were not so fond of hammer and nails; you know nothing about them. Let Jack look at the bracket."

"He knows nothing of hammer and nails either."

"Let him see it."

"O yes, granny; you always think a man's eye, because it is a man's, ought to make things feel ashamed of themselves when they are not hanging straight. Jack, indeed! Why should his hammering do better than mine, if I only hit hard enough?"

"*If*—get the hammer, Jack, do!"

"Yes,—where shall I find it, Katharina?"

"In my straw work-basket, inside the side-board," said Katharina. "I hid it there when

the Nicholsons came to tea." She was holding up the bracket with her shapely hand. I wish to say something complimentary of the said hand; so, as it is neither abnormally white, small, nor supple, I choose the word shapely, for I know she will read this, and it commits me to nothing.

I found the hammer eventually in one of the pigeon-holes intended for bottles of wine. Two or three new-laid eggs and some choice garden seeds were in a second (O woman, how lawless and untidy thou art!) and there were crewels and also some Sunday-school tickets in a third.

I returned. Katharina was still holding up the bracket, which was inanely hanging by two or three tin tacks,—awry, of course. I soon knocked a few pieces of plaster out, and with deafening din knocked in some large nails. The bracket was firm. Was it straight? Well, we soon twisted some of the bushy green stuff about it, and if it was not then as straight as a good man's course through life my aunt did not know it; but, when the noise was over, she remarked with her natural perversity, "What a comfort it is to have a man about the place!"

This reflection brought her to my Malay boy, whom we frequently fall out about. She asked how he was getting on.

I replied, "Very much to his own satisfaction."

"And how is the mare?"

Now the mare is a sore subject with me. When I think of her I know I am a fool, which before I may have only suspected. A valuable Arabian mare which I brought from the East,—she is of no use at all to me, and a man of my means cannot prudently afford to keep her. My Malay boy attends to the fair creature. Her first feat after we got home was to jump over the high fence of her paddock, take various other fences, hedges, and brooks, and, coming across country at a cheerful canter, as one at ease in her mind, cut a few playful capers over my aunt's celery bed, then trot gently up to her drawing-room window and look in.

I could have repudiated her with pleasure if that would have been of any use. I hoped she would not see me; for I was there, tasting the fragrant cup and eating British bread and butter.

She did see me, uttered a jubilant whinny, and, kicking up her heels, bounced in.

My aunt gave a gasp and uttered one of the sharpest yells I ever heard; and I, walking the mare out with my arm round her neck, was

pleased to encounter my Malay's brown face. He had run round after her by the road and, by some wonderful instinct as it seemed, had met her face to face. He has never shown this instinct since ; but he has the credit of it, which is better, and is supposed to be honest and industrious.

He thinks he is a Christian. No, I mean that he says so. He remarked to my excellent housekeeper, who really is one, " Sahib and man go church — kneel down — man like see Sahib 'bliged kneel down."

That was some time ago. He speaks better now. He was first brought to Bombay by an old Indian colonel, and then taught reading, and such English as natives speak, in a mission school. I honour most missionaries deeply ; but my Malay lad knew all the wickedness of the world before they had him, and had more cunning than any European, together with the power "to lie becomingly."

But his manners were charming. I believe that the smoother they become, the harder grows his heart. They say that glass is made tough by being steeped in oil. I find a certain fearful pleasure in the study of his character. He can be revengeful, but not indignant ; he is inanely

conceited, but he has no decent pride. He has a singular liking for me, as I suppose. He stole a watch for me once, because I had lost mine. I am convinced that if he knew I had a grudge against any man he would, at a hint from me, fire his stack, or hough his cattle.

I brought him over and I must keep him, for I dare not turn him loose as he is. Absolutely without a conscience, I must try to develop one ; and my excellent housekeeper tries too. She gets him to read her a chapter every night in the New Testament ; and she talks to him, which he likes.

In the mean time he is very handy ; and when I have visitors, and he helps to wait at table, he seems truly to tread on air, and is in a state of elation and conceit perfectly fatuous. In fact he takes a delight in himself and in his clothes that no Englishman, be his honours and his merit what they may, has ever for many centuries attained to.

This is a long digression.

When my aunt inquired after the mare, I told her she was lame ; and when after the Malay, I plucked forth a letter from my pocket and said it would give her the reason. I received

“Is that the worst you can say?”

“No, I find you inconsistent. I cannot piece the bits of you together, and make out how the man who is a zealous church-warden should have so much mockery in him,—how a man who reads so much should take delight in the society of travelling tinkers, pack his tent and things in a donkey cart and live for weeks on the heather, steeping himself in solitude and in wild places; going after bees and hiding himself to watch finches ; and then, coming home, blow on the French horn, and give a penny reading and a dinner party.”

“I am one of the products of our over civilization.”

“Are you?”

“All that you remark on comes first from my having been born to a small competency, and secondly from my having spent several years of boyhood and early youth in such disability from pain, and restraint through illness, that I could not be brought up to any profession.”

“I know.”

“I could think ; and I thought myself out of and threw away a great deal of what the generations had accumulated for me and that Heaven had bestowed. Then I thought again and found

a certain value in some things rejected, and took them back. I had been very dull without them. Others, I may say, were given back. I entertained them, after their absence, with ardor, finding in my heart a healthful hunger for them, — specially for the God-given knowledge ; and I do not care to whom I say it.”

“I am sure you must have been dull. Jack, write about your Border Countries.”

“Would it not do as well if I wrote about you ?”

“No ; you could not make me interesting either to myself or to grandmother.”

“Do you dare me to try ?”

“I will dare you if you wish it ; but if you do I shall certainly expect to have those sheets of foolscap sent me. And why indeed must you try your hand on me ? You know nothing about me.” Here she laughed.

“That is indeed a new view of matters ! I know you well enough to describe you, if I chose to do it, with an accuracy that would enable an intelligent reader to challenge you if he met you in a country lane.”

“I am glad you allow that I am intelligent, for I shall be the only reader, of course. Where are you going now, Jack ?”

The intelligent reader, for I did not refer to Katharina, will notice a certain abruptness here. That is because the dialogue is taken carefully down from real life. If he will now begin to make observations on real life, which perhaps he never has done hitherto, he will find that human talk generally is abrupt. Nothing is so rare as a set conversation, sensible and sustained,—the sort in fact that we always find in books.

Here I must conclude this ; and if one reader has had his heart cheered by it, his* digestion improved, and his mind and intelligence opened to new facts in human life and thought and conduct,—the present writer will not feel that he has taken up his pen in vain. (Foreign papers please copy.)

* Or *her*.

V.

"WHERE are you going now?" Katharina said; and I answered, "To see Milly."

"Ah, yes!" she replied. "That was a strange thing her little girl said when she was dying."

"Very strange."

I did go to see Milly.

Her cottage stands quite alone in a small thick orchard, and I advanced to it through green wheat and meadow-grass. At six o'clock that morning, when I had first passed this way, the place was all dewy and still, and the woods were full of the whirr of wings. Plovers and blackbirds many had made betrayal of their nests by tossing down blue and green egg-shells, to land themselves like frigates among the branches of cow-parsley which fringed the edge of the woods with flowers more scarlet than scarlet. It was now noon, and the day ardently hot. All things stand in the open cloudless light. We commonly have a few hot days at the end of May. The sun was

with scent of hawthorn in blossom, and odor of fresh resin from the spruce plantations. Rather wasteful farming prevails thereabout, and I was able to keep in shadow most of the way,—first under tall hedges, and next along the side of a spinny.

The nightingales were so noisy that, as I knew they had been singing all night, I wondered when they took the proverbial “nine winks.” The population of England, if reckoned by nightingales, would be found to have much increased of late. The same could not be affirmed of any other bird except the starling. If something is not done to repress the schoolboy and the starling, we shall soon have few small finches left.

Milly’s cottage looked as peaceful as it was secluded ; but the cuckoos answering one another were so close at hand, and the apple and plum trees were so full of blackcaps, finches, and other birds, that it was not as silent as is many a country town.

She had parted with a pretty little girl while I was at Windsor. The child had been ill only for a few days, and as I had known Milly all my life I went to offer my sympathy.

“ Many a slap have I given her,” said the sorrowful mother, wiping away her coursing tears,

but yet appearing to take a pleasure in sitting for a few minutes to indulge them.

The poor who are parents are often pressed hard from morning till night, striving to overtake their work ; they have little time for tender thought.

"Yes, many a slap, for she was the noisiest and the most audacious of all mine. It fairly goes to my heart now to think of it ; but it was all for her good — mother meant it all for her good."

She said these last words just as she might have done if the child had been present to hear.

"And it *was* for her good ; you would not be doing your duty by them if you let them run wild," I answered.

"No, sir ; but it hurts my feelings now. I have a great moil with them at times. She took her medicine so prettily, dear lamb ; and we never thought we were to lose her, till Doctor came and told us.

And then the poor mother related her sorrow, — the indifference of the child to food, even the best that she could tempt her with, and the deep drowsiness that came on in the intervals of pain.

She told how she sat by her child all through

one day,—and there was a noise. All her other children were up and down, in and out, and it seemed to disturb little Mary, for often she would knit her brow ; so she got their grandmother to take them in and manage for them as best she could, that her dear child might have the chamber to herself, “ and die comfortable.”

And so she sat by her another night ; and the child would sigh now and then, but she was often in a deep sleep, and could not take nourishment. The father went to his work just at dawn, and she, overcome with fatigue, dozed a little, for, as she expressed it, “ The nightingales had sung their fill, and she had wept her fill, and the child, who had moaned in the dark, was quiet.”

Suddenly she awoke with a start. The sun had risen, and little Mary was wide-awake, gazing with a wondrous expression of rapture into the corner of the whitewashed chamber with its sloping roof.

She also looked earnestly, but nothing was there.

“ What dost see, my dear ? ” she faltered.

“ O look, mother, look,” said the dying child, still lost in ecstasy and awe. “ Look at those—be they pigeons ? ” and it seems that she made a movement as if she would lift herself up and

raise her arms toward them ; then she fell back and, with eyes wide open and that smile in them yet, she instantly passed away.

It was to the parson's wife that the mother first told this, appearing to find a certain comfort and awe in it, as if she looked on it as the religious experience of her little Mary. But the parson's wife was a good deal scandalized. She felt that there was something grotesque in the narration ; and what significance had it ? It was naught ; but she kept silence, and presently the mother's comment made her thoughtful.

"Sweet thing," said the cottage dame ; "she was such a babe yet, she'd neither been to church nor to school, and how was she to know what God Almighty's angels were like ? She could not think what those were that she saw. She'd never been shown so much as a picture of one."

In those last words lies the sweet strangeness of the story.

It appears that man is naturally aware of spiritual intelligences ; certainly they are neither revealed nor described in the sacred books of our religion,— rather alluded to as already known ; but he is generally so dominated by the fashion of his own frame that if they essay to show

ay,—and there was a noise. Children were up and down, intended to disturb little Mary, for her brow; so she got their garments in and manage for them, that her dear child might have herself, "and die comfortable." And so she sat by her another night, would sigh now and then, but slept sleep, and could not take no. Father went to his work just at overcome with fatigue, dozed a little. He expressed it, "The nightingales I fill, and she had wept her fill, and then had moaned in the dark, was quiet." Suddenly she awoke with a start. Then, and little Mary was wide-awake, a wondrous expression of rapture in the whitewashed chamber without roof.

He also looked earnestly, but nothing

"What dost see, my dear?" she faltered.
"Look, mother, look," said the dying child, lost in ecstasy and awe. "Look at those—ey pigeons?" and it seems that she made a movement as if she would lift herself up and

themselves it must be somewhat in his likeness. It may be that he cannot behold a creature of higher make than his ; or that, beholding, his unacquainted eyes might in the strangeness lose the meaning. Many seers in their ecstasy have set eyes on creatures that had the gift of wings ; otherwise they were but men made mighty and uncorrupt.

To the simpleness of child-eyes something sweet and awful must have shown itself that morning in the void. That it was not in the form of humanity may have been because of the child's truer eyesight,—and to her wider gain.

We are greatly bereft, whom old mediæval painters have fooled. The angels with which they have endowed our fancy are most of them not above humanity but below it ; for we have, as man, the mastery of the world,—as woman, the glory of motherhood ; but they have little more than the innocence of our children,—and for the rest, they are equal to the birds.

Of such angels the old Hebrew writers from first to last have no cognizance. Sometimes the seer's vision bore no likeness to man ; but then it was indescribable,—language would not set it forth. If it was manlike it always had majesty. If it had wings it could yet shoot from place to

place as independent of them. More commonly it was mistaken for a man, and only on its withdrawal (that he might not be confounded) showed itself above him and received his homage; then went over the hills and he could not follow, or walked by him in the dusk and then was not there.

It is the same from first to last. Neither in the plain Gospels nor the Apocalyptic vision is there any hint of angels childlike or feminine,—from the “young men in white apparel,” to the “mighty one” who set his right foot on the earth and his left foot on the sea, and sware by him that liveth forever and ever.

But if a swallow’s flight and tender eyes be all their endowment, what wonder that they should be given over to the little children, to be their solace and admiration!

There is no reason in the world, however, to suppose that an angel is necessarily known for such. “A young man” may frequently be among us now and, passing in the street, may be taken for one of ourselves.

There are stories, both old and new, far more strange if this is not so than if it is. I took pains to collect some quite recent narratives. But those which come from the simple-hearted

and the homely, and from more unsophisticated days, are without apology and without reserve ; they read best.

Here is a typical one. The scene is in Wales.

A venerable preacher, Charles by name, after holding a night service, rode home over the lonely mountains.

Before he set out, a man who had been in the chapel, and knew that he had a sum of money with him, slipped away, and hid himself behind a hedge which skirted the mountain path.

He was a murderer in will, and hoped to be in deed.

At midnight he heard the sound of horse's hoofs. He knew the old pastor was coming ; and he rose, bludgeon in hand.

There was perfect silence, but in the broad moonlight he saw riding beside the pastor another man, — a man on a white horse.

He dared not attack two men. The path was long. He hoped the stranger and the pastor would part ; but no, they still kept together, and at last he gave up following them and went his way.

Some time after, the man fell sick ; and, being sure that he should die, he began to think upon his crimes, and longed to confess his intended

murder to the old pastor, which he did. "You had been a dead man," he said, "but for him who rode beside you on the white horse."

But there had been no man riding beside him! The old pastor, so far as *his own consciousness went*, was perfectly sure that he had been quite alone.

On this narrative I have bestowed no needless words.

The Border Lands are full of mysterious lights; and the spiritual evil-ones, dwelling in them also, have darkness in their habitations,—a mystical darkness that may be felt.

I was cogitating thus as I walked through my friend F.'s field. I shall certainly publish this; therefore I forbear to give his full name. I found him looking rather flustered. He was arguing—rod in hand, at the edge of the brook—with a somewhat chubby-cheeked lad, his sister's son, who was to have been brought up for the Church, but who, on coming home from the holidays, had frightened his widowed mother by informing her, with some elation of manner, that his attitude of mind was one of universal skepticism.

How basely we are treating children. No generation was ever so badly used before.

Those gracious reserves which used to reverence their inexperience are almost given up. What is to become of them? This religion and these writings which have made countless lives honest and noble, countless deaths content and full of hope,—what do we propose to give in lieu of it and of them, that we suffer such talk, and such literature as is continually before our children?

This mother, after prayers and tears and reproaches, sent the lad to F., who also exhorted and then argued, which was a pity, for the lad was conceited and an egotist, and it elevated him almost to the seventh heaven to have his convictions made of so much consequence.

I must say that the discourse, when I joined it, was not dignified. In fact it was grotesque, for F. was getting irate; and, besides, he knew he was out of his depth.

“Hang your conscience,” he was saying. “Why must it needs be so obstreperous? Do you think I find it absolutely necessary to deliver my soul of all the fool’s fancies that are in me?”

“That’s a bad shot, uncle,” answered the lad; but when I found that he really thought we should allow him then and there to lay before us a select few of the arguments which are

supposed to prove that man has no conscience, and no soul either, I turned on a stream of ridicule that I commonly have at command, and after he had been gently played upon for a few minutes his countenance became a study,—a study, after the old masters, in red and black, the black shown mostly about the brows.

I then made a short détour after a butterfly, thinking, meanwhile, of how small use was argument, or ridicule either, excepting to set people fast in their own opinions.

When I came back the chubby-faced boy had recovered his spirits.

He was saying that three hundred millions of years was the least *he could do with* for the development of man out of protoplasm.

F. laughed at him. The boy was much shocked at this levity. He appeared to think his new gospel ought to be treated with a reverence that few bestow on the old. Of course he did not say that to scoff at this would be to risk the welfare of our immortal souls; but, as I remarked to him, he looked at us with a scathing majesty of reproof which nothing but long ages of belief in such risk and such immortality could ever have enabled a human countenance to assume.

It was, no doubt, a survival.

He repeated with solemnity that, come what might of revelation, he must have them. So I said, if he must he must, *if he could get them* (the three hundred millions of years, to wit); and I added that it would make no difference to me, or to the years either, or to the protoplasm, so far as I could see.

It was surprising how this indifference to his requirements appeared to bother the lad. So long as his uncle had been shocked and irritated at his notions he had been as happy as any sucking mastodon in a pre-creation-of-the-world pool. So I told him, blandly of course; for why should I quarrel with him because of opinions that others had put into his head, and mistakes which were all against himself.

"You are a mere child," I observed. "You never earned yourself one day's food or shelter in your life. It is my faith that a merciful God will not allow one who cannot yet undertake his present, to throw his future away; but you had better look out; you will soon be fully responsible, and then, if you make any wilful mistakes, you will certainly have to rue them some day, somewhere."

The poor lad was mortified by this remark on

his youth. I should have been much disgusted by it myself at his age. However, he plucked up spirit to observe that he had already elected for himself the set of scientists that he intended to swear by ; and then, oblivious of the contradiction, he again asserted that his frame of mind was essentially sceptical.

Scepticism is a very rare frame of mind. Man is essentially credulous. He can easily change his mind, ten times a day, from believing one thing to believing its opposite, when it is not in nature or possibility that he should believe neither.

“Some say the king’s dead,” quoth the Frenchman, “and some say he’s living ; for my part, I believe neither the one nor the other.”

However, F.’s nephew confesses to a decided belief in table-turning, spirit-rapping, and other “manifestations” of that sort. F. does not : he contemns them all, root and branch.

For my part, I firmly believe that many so-called manifestations are simple impostures, got up by those who are perfectly innocent of any dark assistance, and do all their spiriting themselves, as a trade to get their living by. Just as F.’s nephew would have performed the offices of our religion as an industry by which to put

bread in his mouth, but not aware that there was any power in them, so they pretend to dealings with demons, while many of them scoff secretly at the notion that there are any disembodied intelligences at all.

This is a new thing in the world. For myself I do not doubt where it comes from.

The founder of our religion, according to the account he gave of Himself, came, among other beneficent purposes, to cast out and destroy the power of the Evil One. This power is, by all observation and history, almost *nil* among Christians, — that is, among real believers in the religion.

Even the outward sign of the sacramental baptism appears to be a protection (whatever else it may be is not in question here) against the approach of the nether king and his power, unless this is invited and desired.

Accordingly the next subtle move of the weird Apollyon and his hosts is to make people believe that they *are not*, — that contempt may enable them to work; or that, being despised and denied, they may be suffered to approach as trumpery or inferior agencies that may be tampered with, — and no harm.

But it will always be found that the further in

one direction go the thoughts of the multitude, the further in an opposite direction will go the thoughts of a few.

All good Christians are possessed. This has been the creed of the churches in all ages.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost" who moves men to righteous deeds. That is one sort of possession.

And I believe in the unholy ghosts who move men to all things hateful. That is the other sort of possession, and both are equally silent and potent.

Men are certainly not wicked enough by themselves to contrive and compass half the evil that gets done in the world; just as they are not good enough by themselves to do such deeds of mercy and righteousness as many saints have done and yet are doing.

But to prove that man is not a spiritual creature the materialist must go into many matters in those Border Lands where the soul and the world touch, or the spirit and the senses meet; and, after all, though any man may reason away another's opinion, it is always useless to reason against his experience.

VI.

WE were sitting under an oak tree. F. had gone a little way up the stream, and the chubby-faced boy was bestowing on me more of his second-hand philosophy. He was enlarging—in a pragmatical fashion which would have been amusing but for the pathetic pity it awoke in me for his absent mother—on the foolish humbleness which makes man (and boy too, I suppose) look outside his own life and nature for objects to reverence, while his true reverence should be for himself; when, with a suddenness that surprised me, he jerked up his legs and began with speed to pull down his trousers, which had been turned up. After this he hastily settled his collar and, with an air of perturbation indescribable, snatched a little comb from his pocket and, lifting his straw hat, furtively smoothed his stubborn locks. I looked in the direction of his eyes.

Katharina !

Yes, and that reminds me I ought to describe Katharina.

She had on at that moment a very large hat trimmed with something soft and white, but I think it was not feathers ; and she wore a pale pink dress, and she carried a straw basket on her arm. She was standing close to the brook which just there spread into a pool, and her image in the not perfectly quiet water appeared, though ever there, to be still flowing away. She had seen us from an upper window of her grandmother's house, and was bringing us some cake, some baked custard, and a bottle of cowslip wine to add to our lunch.

A hundred yards lower down the brook was a wooden bridge : the lad, as if Katharina had not known of it before he was born, started up hastily to escort her over.

And now what is Katharina like ?

Most of us have seen a print representing Mary Queen of Scots, wearing a little sort of bonnet, or cap, which dips in the front. Her face is a short oval, broad at the brows and pointed at the chin,— the shape, in fact, of a guinea-fowl's egg. Katharina is like that ; she is a twilight Mary Queen of Scots.

She is beautiful, then ? Why, as to that,

beauty is a matter of opinion. She has dusky brown hair,—of a twilight and, so to speak, colorless color,—dusky brown eyes, and a somewhat dusky complexion, but yet with no appearance of being tanned.

No, she is not beautiful to my mind, though my eyes approve of her. She is of a good height and neither slender nor otherwise. When I saw the chubby-faced boy walking up to Katharina, with complications of attitude not to be described, and a reverential swagger and a deprecatory pride (yes, I declare that all this was manifest), I burst into a laugh of joy and triumph. My lungs, in short, "did crow like chanticleer." I experienced a new sensation. It was this,—I saw Katharina adored. She was, to the chubby-faced boy, if not exactly as Venus rising from the wave, yet certainly as that same lady walking along by the reeds and rushes, switching them out of the way with her parasol, having on a celestial pink tippet (if that is what you call it), and with a supreme incapacity for understanding that a boy could be anything but a boy. So she took no notice, while he escorted her among the moon-daisies and forget-me-nots, tilting up his head as one who would fain be taller for her sake.

Yes, I experienced a new sensation then ; and I have long noticed that the novelty in a sensation, to a pleasure seeker, is a greater element of pleasure than is the quality of the sensation itself.

This is a digression, but the subject fascinates me and I must explain.

If a man feels dull, or stingy, or nasty in his temper, and dissatisfied with everything, he often thinks he wants a little pleasure ; and he chooses out something particularly agreeable and indulges himself in it.

But I believe there would be far more novelty, and also that more pleasure on the whole might be got out of an experiment of an opposite kind.

Choose for instance, of days in April, one when a specially vicious east wind is blowing. Choose of Japanese fans with magenta sunsets in them, two. Then take of raw green gooseberries half a pint. Take of cats, three, as cross as possible ; tie them into a bag. Carry the whole to the lee side of a tallow-chandler's yard on boiling-day. There eat the gooseberries, beat the cats, and look hard at the screens,—considering remorsefully all the time how we have ruined the taste of the Japanese for art, and given them nothing to make up for the loss.

When you have set your teeth on edge with the gooseberries, and are chilled to the bone with the east wind, and have breathed in the odors of the tallow, and listened to the discord of the cats, release them, and return home. Let this be just at luncheon time.

On entering your modest mansion, and sitting down to a comfortable hot lunch, you will experience a keen sensation of pleasure. All about you will seem warm, sweet, tasteful, harmonious ; and I maintain that while you hug yourself, to think how you are enjoying things in general, you are experiencing far more pleasure in degree than anything but contrast could possibly have given you. And novelty must be added ; if you often try such an experiment it may fail.

The last time* I tried it, which was the first time, it answered beautifully, and yet I only ate half the gooseberries.

Now what did I relate this experience for ? It has nothing at all to do with the matter in hand.

I believe it was because I had given it as my opinion that Katharina was not beautiful ; and I

* Note to the conscientious reader.—Dear Sir, I hope you will not feel bound to believe this statement if it seems to you improbable. You are at liberty to take it for what it is worth.

did not wish to withdraw the opinion, and knew not how to justify it. It seems so unmannerly, — let me slide away from the particular remark by making a few on beauty in general.

But first I may relate that F. came up, and she shook hands with him and treated him with pretty deference. As we met, sat down on the grass, and began to eat our luncheon, I noticed more than ever how exactly Katharina was like that print of Mary Queen of Scots. The man who painted the said Mary no doubt idealized her face, for it cannot be denied that painters and sculptors in general represent what they and their generation admire.

The Greeks, therefore, must have admired large feet. The feet in proportion to the head, as seen in their art, are much larger not only than those we admire but than those we walk upon.

In early mediæval art, such specimens of it as remain to us in missals and statues represent the cranium as abnormally small and low, while the nose is high and large, and the face long. The expression almost always produced, and therefore doubtless admired, is acute, with a small dark eye. There is no such thing as a large soft eye or a languid expression. A

century later finds the Venetians representing women with impossibly high foreheads. The hair is evidently shaved away to increase the seeming height of the forehead, which reaches to the crown of the head ; while at the same time they delighted in a small flat chest, a very long neck, and fingers so long and slender as to be almost a deformity.

In the days of our Henry the Eighth, very small features were probably admired. A collection of Holbein's pictures, for instance, shows features (the eyes included), out of all proportion to the fair wide expanse of the countenance.

In Vandyck's day dark hair and eyes were manifestly the rage. He idealized even his English beauties till they glow with the dark sun-dyes of the South. Later on, a long pillar-like neck was all the fashion.

But perhaps flattery reached its acme early in the present century, when a woman was complimented, by the painter, with eyes comparable for size to those of an ox, while at the same time he gave her feet so small that they could not have sustained her weight.

Photography has cured us of this; but some of the miniature-painters carried it to such a pitch that, if their portraits had been enlarged to life-

size, the eye would have been nearly three inches long.

It is now the fashion among a few to admire a hungry and despairing face, with a lean lanky figure and what our grandmothers called gooseberry eyes. Luckily, few poor creatures in real life are as ugly or as sickly as these appear to most of us in their portraits. They are idealized the wrong way.

When I see foreigners at an exhibition, looking with pity and wonder at such figures, particularly when they appear to be about eight feet in height, I feel inclined to draw near and whisper: "Don't believe a word of this; it is a parable, a revolt against the worship of beauty. They find such women to paint, with great difficulty, and intend to show that no woman is so ugly that a man will decline to paint or to love her." I never carry out this inclination. I know it would be wrong. In fact, it would be lying.

After all, I do not see how Katharina could be changed for the better. Should I like to give her the double chin so much coveted in the days of Mrs. Delany, or the slip shoulder they all longed for a little later on?

Certainly not. She not only looks charming as she is; but, now I consider her face, its short full

oval is all that I could wish. Is beauty all taste ? I cannot be sure ; but I will say that Katharina has always suited my taste,—and so end.

As I sat, a little apart from the group, I observed that Katharina gave it completeness. She had a plantain leaf in her lap, and she ate becomingly. F., on the contrary, struggled with a baked custard in a fashion to make one pity him. I am afraid his nephew did not get half enough to eat. (The hunger of the young is affecting.) F.'s cook had put up a whole fowl and a loaf, but no knife and fork. We should soon have got the better of that fowl, but for the presence of Katharina. F. presently began to nick square blocks out of it with his penknife, and I looked on ; but I soon fell into thought, for I do not mind making the admission that I think occasionally.

It was to this place that I used to be drawn in my wheel-chair, after a terrible illness and accident that I had when I was a good deal younger than F.'s nephew now is. I never see a moon-daisy or a foxglove just beginning to shoot up, but I recover some of that ecstasy,—such a rapture of peace to sit there in the shade, with the hard-featured “skilled nurse” on the grass.

I had been long in pain.

Life and death contended for me, seated one on either side of my bed ; but I gave my own unsolicited interest to life, and when death found it was two to one, he withdrew — to a milk shop.

I employed my first happy days in making many mothers desolate.

It was a shame !

I paid a little urchin, a good deal younger than myself, to tear out all the nests he could get at, and I made a fine collection of eggs. My conscience was sweetly at ease ; I thought not of the action as other than laudable. My nurse baked the nests for me, and helped me to blow the eggs. I liked that woman ; she had a delicate hand and broke none of them. In fact, I never knew her to break anything — but her word.

That was only four-and-twenty years ago : and yet this woman, skilled as she was in nursing, could not write otherwise than in what we call printing hand.

It is extremely pleasant to observe the advance of education, and to note the preposterously hard words with which all sorts of people can now lay about them, bringing these out smoothly, as if they loved them, and fitting them

into the sentence with competent ease. My friend F. ringing his bell to complain to a house-maid that the knife he was using was rusty, she looked at it with attention and keenness, then said, "In my opinion this is not rust, sir."

That the knife was eaten into by rust was most evident.

"If it is not rust," he answered rather hotly, "perhaps you will kindly tell me what it is?"

"No sir," she answered with bland politeness, "that I cannot undertake to accomplish. I was not engaged to answer any such philosophical questions."

Pretty of her, was n't it? and quite true.

Well, I was recalled from these thoughts by F., who, handing me a block of fowl on his pen-knife, and a broken piece of bread, asked me if I was hungry. I was. I took the prog and, recalled to the present scene, heard F.'s nephew discoursing at large to Katharina. I heard him refer to the works of Plutarch, Esquire, and say that there was an appreciable difference between his mode of treating subjects and that of a modern; so I, who love to be of use, here struck in, and said: "There's an appreciable difference, too, between a buffer and a duffer; but the careless world seldom defines it."

"Don't, Jack," said Katharina. So I disposed myself, instead of mingling in the talk, to listen with refined civility, for I cherish good manners; and it was pretty to see how good Katharina was, and how grave she looked, till the youngster, speaking of some yew trees in sight, and lamenting that their leaders had been docked, said sadly, "But this piece of mischief was done by one who went to his grave many years ago, out of mere perversity."

I laughed then; but mine was not the bitter laugh of jealousy, and you will the more easily believe me when I remark: first, that I have already declined the honor of Katharina's hand and heart; secondly, that I am sure her chubby-faced adorer has not the remotest chance of either; and thirdly, that she has been for five years, with my full approval, engaged to Another.

Perhaps at this point I had better explain. When I was about fourteen years of age I met with, as I have said, an accident. I will tell of it here, for I shall do so in fewer words than Katharina would.

It was on a frosty winter afternoon. The world was all white and the western sky was one flush of scarlet. As I came over the brow

of a hill, through the spinney, I saw, between the trunks of the last trees, this pool, the very pool we have been speaking of; and there was a boy about my own age on it, and then there were two girls, both younger.

I knew the ice would not bear.

I dashed forward and, once clear of the wood, stood an instant and shouted to them with all my might.

They all turned. In half a minute, while I rushed down the hill, I saw the boy, who had skated close to the brink, up to his neck in water, and crashing his way out with vast splashings and commotion. In another instant the fountain of spray fell. The middle of the pool could be seen again. It was heaving, and it was a blank.

I tore a great ragged stake from the hedge and sped to the pool. I never have known how the matter was managed, but I was creeping on my stomach, over the cracked and creaking ice, with the long stake at my side, when I got hold of the elder girl by her hair; and she helped herself, for the stake was about nine feet long and she held by it. And I remember that, as she rose through the hole, I saw the little one's red cloak, only a foot or two farther on, under

the transparent ice. That I yelled, and tore at the ice and burrowed under it, I remember ; and then that the child was out, and that the stake which had partly supported us was broken. It broke under my ankle, for it was rotten in consequence of a rusty nail that was in it.

The splinters, and indeed the end of the stake, ran into my ankle, but I knew nothing of that just then ; and people who had seen us, by that time had run together and flung hurdles to us. In short, we all got to the edge alive ; but I was only just alive, and what with one of my ankle bones being broken, and the nail having made intimate acquaintance with my sinews, I had, as an American would say, rather a serious time of it. I had a rheumatic fever, too, and have been somewhat lame ever since. The worst of it was that for several years, at intervals, I had bouts of the same pains and penalties in the before mentioned ankle, and while they lasted I had to go about on a rat of a pony, or to use a crutch.

But as regards the offer.

I was now nineteen years of age, and Katharina nine ; and I was sitting disconsolate at the bottom of my aunt's garden, with my crutch at my side.

This crutch, I am thankful to say, has been discarded for many years; and I can walk as far, I do not say as gracefully, as most men. At that time I entirely depended on it.

It was at the edge of a small lawn, retired, and generally used as a play place. Three large trees had been felled and were lying across it. I, lost in moody thought, was seated on one. Katharina, a dancing sprite in a white frock, sprang upon another and contemplated me.

"Jack," she presently said, "shall you ever want anybody to marry you?" At that stage of my career I regarded the notion of matrimony with disfavour, and did not vouchsafe her any answer.

"Fanny says," she continued (Fanny was her nurse), "that nobody would marry a man with a crutch. I said that was a story."

Here she sprang down from the tree-trunk.

"I said that was a story," she repeated, "because, my beautiful Jack, *I* mean to marry you,—at least if you'll let me. Don't you think you will?"

I replied that I thought I would not. I said she was not big enough, and besides, I could not have a wife who did her French verbs so badly; but the more I insisted, the more Katha-

rina insisted, and the next day she brought me a letter in printing hand which ran thus :—

“ MY DEAR JACK,—Grandmamma says I shall soon be a big girl. If you teached me I could feed your birds, and get the weeds and things you want out of the hedgers and woods. So don’t you think you will marry me ?

“ Your loving little cousin,
“ KATHARINA.”

Now for the rest of it.

The reader has already jumped to a conclusion. Through reading many books he is sure that the child whom I saw under the ice and risked my life for was Katharina ; hence her childish wish to devote her life to me. But he considers, in his wisdom, she is engaged to Another ; no matter, that engagement will be broken off and she will marry our hero in the end.

I am sorry to disappoint you, my dear reader, but the fact is the child with the red cape was not Katharina.

No ?

The boy was her brother ; the girls were both her sisters, and have been married some time. The elder is the mother of some of the most

troublesome children I ever had anything to do with. Her husband,— so different is real life from fiction,— her husband has never shown the slightest jealousy of me, or the least tendency to think that her life must be blighted because I did not ask her to be mine.

As to the little one, we were in general good friends, though we often quarrelled. I helped her in her love affair, and I also gave her away. She never thought and I never thought that anything more was to be expected of either of us ; and I put it to the candid reader, whether, because I had been so unfortunate as to lame myself on her account, it behooved me also to endow her with all my worldly goods, as well as to promise solemnly to love and cherish her till death did us part ?

This is a necessary digression and I shall therefore not offer any apology, but take up the thread of my narrative and say that, luncheon being over, I retired from the lady and the two fishers, fetching a wide compass in order that I might give a look to my little plantation — little plantation of ai — No, Katharina, I promised that I would not mention the “tree of heaven” any more ; but if my back did not ache before I had done watering some trees which we will call

chestnuts, and which I consider to be of the greatest consequence,— I had better break off here, or I shall offend again.

It is not to be annulled, as my Malay boy would say,— meaning, as I suppose, it is not to be expected,— that any man, even for the best of cousins once removed, should stay indoors to write a book in butterfly weather.

I have rambled to the British Museum, since writing the above, to see Captain Howland Roberts's present of fifty-seven lepidoptera from Candahar,— also to feast my eyes on the rare and strange specimens of the hunting-spider, given by Mr. Rye.

As I returned, some people in the railway carriage remarked that the whole country was like a vast garden. How I hate the race of gardeners. No, that would be wrong; I mean how difficult I find it to love the race of gardeners.

They have spoilt most of, and injured all, the country gardens that I know of. It is a pity we do not peg down Turkey rugs and Persian carpets on our lawns. They would look just as well as do some of their more elaborate ribbon and stripe beds.

I have all sorts of aspirations concerning gardeners. Sometimes I hope they will forth-

with strike for double wages, for most of us are poor at this time and could not pay. At other times I wish their wives would immediately insist on our visiting them ; or I desire to see them develop a craving for county society, and, because they cannot have it, make the gardeners emigrate.

- Why, they will be weeding our woods next, if we do not look out, and planting neat rows of Tom Thumb geraniums along the brinks of our brooks.

No, I rejoice to testify that the country is not at all like a garden.

I went out at five o'clock this morning, before the dew was off, and walked to the edge of my friend F.'s spinney to delight myself with the sight of a delicate reach of wood-mellick, a grass of surpassing beauty.

There was no wind. The air only just moved enough to make it tremble slightly, as if some ecstasy had overtaken it and was moving it to part with a diamond drop here and there from its purple panicles to the lush green of its leaves. It was all shot in and out with sunshine, and had an effect as of a bloom hanging over low green leaves which stood up swordlike and still ; or rather as of a mirage or a mist, adorned here

and there with butterflies newly waked. I could have gazed on it longer, but the wild hemlock, growing breast-high and crowned with a milky-way of flowers, tempted me farther on.

These composite blossoms confound the mind, each uncountable unit of the multitude is so perfect, and on each one has been bestowed such a delicacy of elaboration.

They say that Herschel turned his telescope one night on the Milky Way ; and having counted sixty thousand stars passing over its field in an hour, he was tired, and ceased.

There must be as many little white stars here in these fair flower clusters as in all the Milky Way together ; for the bed, with a gracious preference for shade, follows the winding outline of the spinney, and for an acre edges it as with costly froth,—fairer than anything the greenhouse holds, or than the wary gardener has pinched back with his thumb.

F. will have a show of pelargoniums shortly, but I do not gather that he means to show his wild-hemlock.

VII.

THE fall of woman, commonly called the fall of man,—the two sexes together standing for humanity,—was a greater fall by far for one than for the other. It brought that sex to the top which was not meant to be there; and, as related to the Hebrews in the book of Genesis, is, to my mind, the most surprising story ever told.

Moses was a brave man.

Those to whom he told it would be much confirmed in their conviction of his divine authority and inspiration, by their probable belief that no man in his senses would have invented anything so strange, so undesirable, and so invidious as the putting of woman so exceeding high and man so distinctly down.

Adam, as he there appears, was not much of a man; but he had been put at the head, and whether he kept there by rising above woman, or by pulling her down below his own level, is fair matter for speculation. At any rate, his descendants had got on when Moses dared them

with this story ; they had their women well in hand, almost under their feet. Very probably they did not let them know about this matter ; for it was a man's world then, and a man's world it continues to this day,—man's only.

I have the deepest respect for womanhood. My mother was a woman, and I have heard that my maternal grandmother was also ; but as she died some time before my birth, what I know concerning her is all on the testimony of others.

A man's world, but woman bides her time. "The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small." As a man, I have my forebodings. I think we shall catch it soon, when they find out, when they combine and put us into our original places again,—when, in short, their Maker turns again their captivity, and removes the veil which hangs before their eyes.

It may be partly on this account that I never omit a chance of being obliging and helpful to a woman.

I hope this will be remembered in my favour when her time comes.

It was for this purpose that—shortly after eating that luncheon, and taking a six weeks' tour on the Continent, during which time I ceased

from my literary labors—I went down on the twentieth of July, in the year of grace 18—, to Portsmouth, and found myself in Her Majesty's dockyard, on a distractingly fine day, with a baby on one arm who was old enough to pull my nose, a big basket under the other, a tin bath and several bandboxes set at my feet and left in my charge. I had come down to escort and to help the wife of an officer, a very good friend and cousin of mine, she being also a cousin,—in short, Katharina's elder sister.

She was to sail for India that very day, with her husband and her baby.

The vast troop-ship, with her “distinguishing stripe,” spread out her milk-white bulk alongside. O my friends and enemies,* what a sight she was! What a beautiful, pathetic, cruel, soul-stirring sight it all was!

Poor sword and sash bearer; thy better half must stay behind to bring up, or to tug up, thy boys! Poor redcoat; thy rib, sparerib though she may be, is not to go! No room for her.

I went on board. Comely mothers of all ranks had brought young girls to take leave of their engaged lovers; and these, with husband and wife, mother and son, melted there in public

* Let me not exclude any who may be indifferent to me.

and did not mind. Nobody minded. I did not mind. I should have liked to imitate some of those officers, and take the dear creatures in my arms.

But I controlled myself. Besides, I had already the baby and the bath, and now a deck-chair, to hold. Yes, I repeat it ; what a man's world this is ! A ship of war shows this as well as most articles.

Sweet things ! It was sad for them all, saddest for the young ; but these would have been sweeter yet, if cold separation had not come between them and their sobbing heroes. A girl and a guinea are both alike. You never know how good they are till you ring them.

I consider that the classical females of renown, if we could meet them now, would look rather dowdy, and perhaps clumsy, among our modern beauties and graces. They stalked about with a certain swing (I allude more particularly to Minerva, Juno, Hebe, and that set), so that, what with their large feet and large waists, and their wearing no gloves, it would n't do.

The girls I saw this morning, as they entered the dockyard, were so finished in all their appointments, — so complete. They moved more gracefully than a sailing sloop ; and what can one say more ?

Their feet, methought, were overmuch tilted forward on little props like black cotton-reels ; but who could forbear to display insteps of such convincing shape, which so small a boot enshrined in fashion so distracting ? As to their gowns, I remember some more to my mind, — robes which, when the wearer walked, fell into gracious if not majestic folds.

These had a sort of valance hanging below the knees, which seemed to tie them up with causeless severity ; but this may be prejudice. I wish to look on all feminine gear as setting off that loveliness which, as we are informed, is destined to elevate the coarser sex.

It is only good manners so to look at it. Good manners is the valet of good sense.

If an angel, in this present year of grace, came down to teach a day-school, what would probably be two of the first things in which he would give his lessons ? I think they would be reverence and good manners ; we want both hugely.

I can stand a good deal of crying from women ; but I hate to see a man cry, and did not desire to be a crying man.

I heard the distant band draw near. I saw all the redcoats march on board, including the

drummers (poor little fellows!) and their goat,—a certain silky-haired arrogant personage, who appeared to think that the show was got up entirely for his glorification.

Defiant martial music is all very well, excepting on occasions which have in them a natural and convincing pathos. When the mourning-women of the East are howling and wailing, flinging their arms about, and making as if they tore their hair, one can look on and be critical. They are paid to chant; and sometimes the dead is some old scoundrel, well out of the way. This was different. Sorrow, thus defied to show itself, sits bleeding, and cries at the heart.

So, before it was needful, I took leave of my friends; and, having done all I could for them, stepped ashore and — ran away.

I went to the nearest hotel and had a tolerably good luncheon, during which I moralized much. Then, having nothing to do, I crossed Southsea Common again, and had just reached the shingly shore, when, behold! she came,—the troop-ship came.

A crowd, chiefly of women and boys, ran along the shore, sobbing and cheering, and being answered by faint cheers from the ship. For a little while they kept up with her, while like a

white daylight ghost she moved majestically and swiftly, skimming along the coast in a deep calm, over the pale blue sea,—the ghost of glory ; but glory is a sham and she was a reality.

A thousand soldiers, standing looking over her side, made a long red line on her upper deck ; but their faces were not distinguishable. How many will come back again from the east ? and what will they be like when they do ?

I walked on, past Southsea Castle, and left the group of soldiers' friends and wives and sweethearts behind me. As soon as I was out of hearing I turned and apostrophized it : “O woman, woman ! you are in this transgression. I am sick of hearing of Woman's Rights, while her faults are so many and her foolishness is so great. Your star is already in the ascendant, and man is a minority. How long will it be before you take heart and perceive that, if you would but combine, nothing in the world could be done ‘without the leave of you’ ” ?

Woman is not merely the female man. She is from him a strangely different creature. Nothing that breathes is such a contrast as the man is to his mate. Culture makes this only more evident.

There is nothing in Eastern life, or in the life of the Hebrews, that does not stand in sharp contrast to the account given by Moses of the first state of life as led by our first parents. He was looking for companionship among the beasts, when she came and straight-way desired for both that they "should be as gods."

Now God does not make the best first. When the highest comes down, it has the greatest fall.

The lord of the earth is earthly; his passions have dominion over him; and it is only among some of the Christian nations that woman is his true helpmeet now,—elevates him and teaches him to feel and to aspire, as she was meant to do at first.

After all the centuries of ignorance, degradation, slavery, woman is still the higher creature in some—and those the higher—things.

That which can give up best, does give up most, has in fact the fairest theory and practice of self-sacrifice, must come to rule in the end, though it should wait for its realm many thousands of years.

The Founder of our faith moved the world to restore woman; and ever since, the sexes have been weighed in a balance. One day they will

be equally poised,— and then the balance will begin to turn.

I hate a great deal of the common cant about Woman's Rights, because its aim is so low; it keeps so completely on the surface. I look to the direction of which my heart prophesies,— the direction from which the right, the true right, is to come.

Man makes woman his slave, by his might or by his law: by the first where he is lawless; by the second where he is a lawgiver, for he frames all his laws so as to keep this precious chattel powerless,— to have a right to her, all she does and all she has.

Woman should not therefore sigh for rights so much in the line of politics, trade, or property, but rather, and first,—for that is higher,— her rights in man.

O wasteful woman! She who may
On her sweet self set her own price,
Knowing he cannot choose but pay,—
How hath she cheapened Paradise!

That word “may” should be changed into “might”— might if she would, and all is told.

“Because thou hast done this, thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee.” Yes! and to have her under his feet has been

as great a misfortune to him as to her ; it has been to lose his own best chance of rising.

Woman, in the new dispensation, has the right and the power to be free ; but she is slow to learn, or love, or take her freedom. It is only in the more enlightened of Christian countries that any woman has any real right in any one man, — that is, by a lawful marriage.

What is the ideal world, then ?

What sort of a world would this be for peace, plenty, health, and industry, if a lawful marriage was the only way in which a man could obtain possession of any one woman ?

What stands in the way of such a state of things ?

First, besides her love of luxury, stands woman's want of willingness to combine ; and last, her want of power to organize.

These are her two greatest defects. She does not love her own, she loves the more selfish sex. If she can be prevailed on to combine it must first be shown her that this would be even more for man's advantage than for her own ; and if she can be taught to organize, it must be by man himself.

There are trade-unions, clubs, corporations, societies, armies, without end. They all belong

to men. Why should not the women of the Christian nations bind themselves also into vast sisterhoods, the rich helping the poor and the poor trusting the rich,—all agreed, and encouraging one another to declare that nothing but marriage will do for them? Moreover, that a good character shall count as much in a man's case as it does in a woman's?

Such a notion as that would be enough to cover the women with ridicule, but only at first. If a decree once came into operation,—but that is a parlous *if*; and yet, if such a sisterhood were once formed, it would begin, even before they had done laughing at it, to make men behave themselves.

It has never been shown yet that women like better to be slaves and vagabonds than to be married wives and courted maidens. If they do, there is no more to say.

If not, their destiny is in their own power, when they can only consent as to what it shall be.

Woman has already the larger share as well as the harder part of life, for she does the serving and man does the ruling. It is far easier to rule well than to serve well. She must undertake more, and show man how to rule while yet she continues to serve.

She has a good many advantages already, which would greatly help her if she would take her place.

The first to be considered is, that a vast majority of the women in this country earn their own bread, whether they are married or single.

They are much more economical than men.

And they are more numerous.

Some of them are rich and independent.

None of these matters are in dispute.

One may add to them that there is a vast deal of human nature in a man, and in a woman a vast deal of human art. Human nature is but commensurate with human life; and life is short, but art is long.

Generation after generation of men come up, and for the most part they succumb to human nature. They are fighting animals. None restrain them; they fight. Women let them. They come back minus an arm, a leg, an eye, and the fair fools cry over them, and even like them all the better.

They are sensual animals. Many of them waste their youth, ruin their health, and sin against woman. While they thus act, modest women pretend not to see, and afterwards marry them.

Then, are men worse than women ?

I write, remembering that you will read this, Katharina. The wickedness of the world is not "print" to you. How good man is to the purer portion of your sex ! How he respects your innocence !

Now let me answer : No !

No ?

Woman, in the great accusation, is worse than man ; and the accusation includes even you.

For generation after generation of women comes up, and they succumb to their love of luxury. For them mainly are the gorgeous pageants,—are the costly clothes, the gold lace, the carpets of velvet pile, the diamonds and the splendors of life. The pride of life is in their souls, and mainly for them.

It is luxury that stands in the way of the civilized world, so that men cannot marry young and be happy.

For the earth does not produce unbounded riches for a few while yet the many can have enough.

Equality among men is a word without meaning or possibility ; but notwithstanding, squalor and destitution might be things outside our experience, as should be luxury and waste.

Here I seem to hear Katharina say: *But women cannot possibly be expected to give up luxury.*

No; but the world grows better by the unexpected and the impossible.

Women are not angels.

No, but they are — women. What has not woman done already? what has she not borne?

She must rise by voluntary descent. "Ye shall be as gods," were the words that tempted her; and still this pride of life has dominion. Let her lay it down that she may be *as men*.

At present she is not "as men," for she fell, and men trampled on her; and she has the vices of a slave. She desires a short-lived passion and admiration, where she ought to command a lifelong love, honor, and esteem.

She flatters where she ought to encourage, and she condones most where she ought to be most severe.

I adore the unexpected. It is what I expect, and not without reason. What we have no business to expect crops up from time to time and refreshes the world.

As for the impossible, I revel in it; for I was born in Utopia, where the impossible was born.

It was quite impossible that slavery should be put down. Could you expect people to pay millions of money to put down what, as individuals, was no fault of theirs?

Everybody said it was not to be expected, it was impossible; and then that same everybody helped to do it.

Since then it has been done again at a cost of far better stuff than gold.

We are beginning to have a great tussle with drink now. Woman woke up during that last war,—woke up for good and all, and began to bestir herself.

How ridiculous she has made herself! How ridiculous she is making men make themselves, it rejoices my heart to perceive; for nothing that can live through ridicule can ever be put to death by anything else. Make yourselves into vast secret societies, my liege ladies, and the world will be yours. Man is ordained to love and admire you. If you should decree that you will spend less time and money in your adornment, do you think that will make any difference? Not at all; you may do it with impunity.

Have you not experimented to the utmost already, and found that whether you trail a gown yards after you in the dust, or hang hoops

about you till you abide in a cage, or draw your sashes round with merciless tightness, or assume the bed-curtains, arraying yourselves in patterns like peonies and melons for bigness, he admires you just the same?

But woman has another advantage over man ; she is more religious. Our religion suits her well, for it was founded in self-sacrifice and voluntary descent.

She is the lesser creature, the inferior animal of the two ; her passions, her strength, her intellect are less ; but also she is less of an animal and more of a spirit.

VIII.

“**L**OOK out, you duffers! If you don’t want to be tossed, the Pope’s bull and the lawyer’s calf are not more to be avoided than the Solent. What tubs! One might as well go to sea in a cradle or a coffin.”

I was looking across the Solent when I said this aloud to Myself, who answered: “I am afraid, sir, you would be quite at sea in either.”

This little dialogue took place the following morn. I had slept at Southsea, after going out to dinner; some fellows, to whom I had innocently given a dinner on a previous occasion, having ungratefully insisted that I should dine with them on board Her Majesty’s ship — Whatever-you-like-to-call-her.

Talk of a beast of burden, what is his yoke compared with that of a man of burden? and who is he but one made continually to go out to dinner against his will?

The Solent had lost all its yesterday’s calm.

I took a canoe and went after a party whom I saw in one of the tubs apostrophized above.

They had written to insist that I should come to a lawn-tennis party that afternoon. I felt that I would rather fly the place than submit to the tyrannous hospitality which was blowing up like a storm to pelt me with invitations.

I drew up to them.

"O Jack," they cried when I was within hail, "we're so dull! The fish won't bite! Make us laugh; haul us out a handful of jokes."

"What," said I, "do you think the fish would rise at that bait? No, my lads, fish never take a joke. I never knew one yet that could."

They had two sweet little cockney girls with them. One was making piteous pretence of being happy; the other looked very white about the mouth. "O Mr. Jerome," she said, "would you mind taking me ashore in your canoe—because—the sun is so hot on my back?"

In my canoe!

I was obliged to make her observe that this was impossible; but in her interest I said there would certainly be no fish caught that morning, and I advised them to give up their fishing party. Then I told them I could not accept their kind invitation, because I was going home that very afternoon.

So we parted. The sea rose every moment.

As I went back I passed as near as was safe to a schooner that looked, in the long swell, like an ungainly beast wallowing about, creaking, and slipping down as fast as she rose on the wave. Then I passed astern of a steam-tug, rolling about in an absurd fashion.

There is something very ridiculous in the appearance of a tug—a short thick one—standing across the waves, waiting for a signal to bring some ship in,—and being rolled about by the water while she first backs her engines, then makes them go, trying to keep in one place. She looks as if she must be sea-sick.

So I went home,—went to see Katharina and her grandmother, to report concerning the sailing of the troop-ship.

Katharina was unusually silent and grave, and so she had been the last time I had seen her.

I did not think it was all because her elder sister had sailed. I agreed with F., who had also seen her, and who said to me that he thought she must have had a letter from Another.

“Another,” as we all agree, is a remarkable man,—as true as steel but not demonstrative. When first he went to the East, Katharina was uneasy at his short epistles and at the spaces

between them ; but as time went on, and every letter, when it came, showed that he was as far from changing, himself, as he was from deeming it possible that she could change, she learned to mock at her fears, and I helped her.

It is extraordinary what difficulty some men find in writing letters.

Well, Another made a small fortune, and was almost deciding to come home, marry her, and take her out, when he lost it and had to begin again. I think Katharina found my counsel, my sympathy, and perhaps my belief that all would come right, a comfort to her at that time ; but she is a cunning creature. She did not tell Another that her limping cousin was kind, for Another, be it known, had been jealous of me, and had once been heard to say, with a touch of bitterness, that I "did not limp worth mentioning." Now when that was repeated to me I felt that I owed him a good turn. I was pleased, too, for this was the testimony of an enemy (a friendly enemy of course) ; and I have felt ever since that if my enemies consider my limp not worth mentioning, it may be to my friends (if they shut their eyes) not visible at all.

But what do you think ? Katharina's gravity

had nothing to do with Another ; for the next day she came to see me, mounted into my loft where I was stuffing a bird, and, after seating herself on the one chair, took out her handkerchief and began to cry with all her heart.

“O Jack,” she exclaimed, “I am so miserable!”

“It must be that fellow Another!” I exclaimed. “He has written and asked you to come out and marry him, and you do not like the parting with your grandmother. Well, but you know you have long promised that you would do this as soon as he could send for you ; and I have promised to escort you. He could not have chosen a more inconvenient time of year, though, for me,—no, not if he had hurried his own affairs on purpose to do it.”

“You need not be so cross,” said Katharina, “it is nothing of the kind. I have not heard from him ; and nobody is ill, and I have not heard any bad news.” Here she sobbed again and said, “But I wish you would come downstairs.”

“Cannot you cry just as comfortably here?” I answered, for I was much relieved by her last speech and wanted to go on with my work.

“The birds look so nasty with cotton-wool for eyes,” she answered. “O Jack, I have not seen Anna for two years.”

"Oh, that's it," was my reply; "and I must say it is a great shame. Turn your chair round, that you may not see the cotton-wool, and let us talk this over. You never see Anna now?"

So she sat with her back to me. It is not at all unbecoming to women to cry. Katharina cried a little, and said Anna had invited her to come and stay *in the tents*, pitched just now on a lovely heath in Westmoreland; and she cried again, and said her grandmother would not hear of it. Here I put in, "Of course not;" and she said, "I thought you were going to talk it over."

"I shall not talk your grandmother over."

"But if you would go and look, and see what sort of a place they are in? If there is a village near, grandmother might be persuaded to take lodgings in it, and take me with her,—I do so want to see Anna."

"Godfrey and your grandmother cannot bear one another; they would certainly quarrel."

"But I should see Anna!"

"Anna is very happy with him at present. She might be set against him by one or both of you."

"But he is so odd!"

"Yes, it seems as if nature turned out some

men by the dozen or by the score ; but he is of his own kind, and the only specimen extant."

"Then you will not go, Jack ?"

"Then,—I will ! But I would have you to know that there are many advantages in oddness. In my opinion there used some time ago to be too many odd people in the world, and now there are too few. The advantages of having odd people among us are, first and foremost, that they set us thinking."

Katharina had started up and dried her eyes. She said joyfully : " You really mean it ; you really will go ? "

" I was about to discourse with you on the advantages of oddness, a subject which I have long been considering. I see I may spare my pains ! Yes, I really will go."

" O Jack, what a dear fellow you are ! "

" I have long suspected it ! If I find that there really is a village close to Godfrey's tents, I may go and stay there myself, and invite your grandmother and you to be my guests. I shall take the cob and my little carriage down to drive you backward and forward."

" O Jack ! "

" Provided always that you are extremely careful not to offend the odd man !" So presently

Katharina departed ; and perhaps I was not altogether sorry, for I like to have my say out when I am inclined to talk ; and I went straight on, when she had descended, not doubting that if there had been auditors they would have been respectful.

The advantages of having odd people among us, as I was remarking, are, first and foremost, that they set us thinking.

In this country, for instance, we live in houses, and we take for granted that it is the right thing,—in fact, the only thing to do; unless we fall in with people who, having a town house and a shooting-box, deliberately go forth from both, that they may enjoy themselves during the summer,—and that in a tent.

I have tried this trick myself twice, so I know there is something to be said for it.

Then, unless we have any special reason to do otherwise, we may all be said to breakfast about nine o'clock in the morning and go to bed about eleven, summer and winter; but if we, or one of us,—or, to speak plainly, if I, myself,—walking up to a suburban villa at nine o'clock on a summer evening, find a footman sitting on a chair in the front garden, who desires me not to ring lest I should disturb his master and

mistress and the other servants, who are gone to bed, because at that time of year they rise at four o'clock in the morning, while the air is sweet and free from smoke, and have their breakfast in the back garden,— why, it is apt to cause thought. It may even raise a doubt as to whether the common plan is the best.

Then, as a rule, I think it may be said that we all desire to get on in the world, if not to get up. Having been born respectable, we do not wish to die in a ditch. None of us regard with complacency what we call coming down in the world.

We exist, as it were, in layers. The layers lie one above the other ; and we like to move and work and visit in our own layer or the one above it.

Voluntary descent—which is quite distinct from self-sacrifice—is an uncommon notion to us if presented in the light of an advantage.

If a man, the younger son of a baronet, is well educated and has a good income (though no land), how can he make experiments to ascertain whether he or a common carrier on a country road, he or the master of a parish school, he or an itinerant vender of tin-ware, is in the happier position ?

These things, by common consent, have been decided long ago.

Yet the man Godfrey, one with whom I have a keen feeling of fellowship and friendship, has tried all these experiments ; and why should n't he if he likes ? When he had tried them I asked for his opinion. " Which of these states of life," said I, " is the happiest ? " He answered that he did not know, for that in trying them he had not been able to divest himself of all that he had felt and learned and seen. He had certain prejudices concerning food and sleeping accommodations that he could not overcome, so that the experiment had not been fairly tried ; " which," said he, " is a pity ."

" Why a pity ? " was my reply. " You would not divest yourself, would you, of the results of culture, reading, and travel ? You must allow that these are advantages."

" I allow nothing that I cannot prove," he answered ; " I take nothing for granted."

He is such a good fellow ! But to hear his relations talk of him you might suppose he was a reprobate ; for of course he has ruined his prospects. " So long as thou doest well for thyself," says the wise man, " men will speak well of thee." He might have added, " and no longer."

Well, but the advantages of oddness to other people?

The second is, that the odd are never cowards; they have the moral courage to dare surprise, disapproval, ridicule. Now courage is a virtue that spreads. We catch it of one another.

And thirdly, the odd people, by choosing to be glad, contented, happy, or even unhappy, in a way that is not our way, make the tyranny of custom more bearable, so far as we must bear it, and make us more willing to rebel against it when we know this is our wisdom, and to our advantage or our peace.

The misery that such as are not odd suffer from the tyranny of custom, no tongue can tell.

Now that cousin of mine, whose red cape I pulled out from under the ice, with her curly head beneath it —

“Yes?” cries the reader.

She was Katharina’s sister.

“So you said before.”

I helped her with her love affair; and she married the said Godfrey. He is — the — very — oddest — man — I ever met with.

“Oh!”

I am much attached to him. I call him a poet, partly because he never writes verses.

Writing verses is such a *common* trick ! Anybody can do it ; I can. If your poet likes to do it too, now and then, so be it. But a real poet is a very *uncommon* man. A poet, for instance, is always one who can see things,—not merely one who can feel things and twaddle about them.

I have no idea of defining a poet here ; but I consider that he ought to be a man wholly alive at all points,—keen, and awake with stirring consciousness, and aware of, as living among, the lives overhead, alongside, and beneath him.

As for this Godfrey, he breathes in the air of all the ages, and nothing is so old that he cannot work it up into the web of his own being. What is future to the race is not all future to him ; and, as there is nothing so new that he has not yet felt it, there is nothing so remote that it never drew near and looked him in the face.

He has a very reverent mind toward the heavenly, but there is nothing on earth that he does not question and hold in doubt.

However, as I said, he is odd all through, and does not mind being called odd. He had made a decree that he would marry at eight and twenty, and that is how I came to be akin to

him ; for his Love, on purpose to get away from him, went, without giving him any warning, and married a curate,—she being utterly frightened, — not at his strange notions but, at the sudden discovery that he meant to carry them into action.

“I shall marry just the same,” he said to me when I went to condole.

“Why, who is to be the lady?” I exclaimed ; for I knew it was within three weeks of the proposed time.

“I don’t know,” he answered thoughtfully, and with his usual air of earnest candor.

Well, I had a sudden inspiration. I said, “Why not Anna?” and it came to pass.

He said afterward, with pleasure, that the thing had been arranged with wonderfully little fuss. Fuss was a thing that he hated ; and as, very soon after they were married, Anna told him that she had loved him all her life (which I had suspected), there is no harm in my telling it.

He had a theory that there ought to be men of culture and property who were willing to live on little more than a tinker’s earnings or a day-laborer’s wages,— to lead a useful simple life, and prove whether it is not as fruitful in happi-

ness and good as the more common style,—and so charm envy out of the hearts of the labouring people.

He had means, he said, and if any young fellows liked to try that kind of thing he would set them up in tents and tools. Two young Cantabs came forward at once; but one of them got the earache, and the other had rheumatic fever. Then he had a following of six, who adored him, but they found Great Britain a restricted sphere. The various handicrafts are well represented already,—several tinkers and basket-makers offered to fight them for the custom of the road,—and there are, besides, very few open places left where a man is allowed to pitch a tent; so these went off to a less sham rusticity,—they emigrated.

Godfrey had two or three fights forced on him, to the intense terror of his wife, before he was allowed to take his place among other tramps.

The first time I saw them after their marriage they were encamped in a secluded part of Cannock Chase. I did no more than spend the day, and at night I slept at an inn called the Shrewsbury Arms in the town of Rugeley. When I first caught sight of them Godfrey, sitting in the opening of the tent, was weaving

a basket. Anna, dressed in a green satin gown, was kneeling beside a brook, washing the breakfast china that they had used that morning.

She answered my glance.

"Yes, I was determined to have my best china with me. I knew, if the house was to be let furnished, some of it would be broken ; so I thought if it must be broken, I should prefer to break it myself."

She looked the picture of health and careless happiness, but I did not tell her so. Health and happiness, to be real, should be unconscious ; we may easily haggle ourselves out of them. To catch the precious things and then take no notice of them is, if you want to keep them, the best part of the trick. Never go up to a wren's nest and put your finger in to feel if the eggs are warm. If you do, I know of no bird so likely to desert and let them grow cold.

I glanced at Anna's little brown hands. She laughed and said, "This is much better than sitting on a sofa, doing art needle-work." And then I glanced at her gown. "It does look rather droll here, no doubt," she observed ; "but Godfrey says I had better wear out the gowns I have before I buy new ones. He thinks, too, that one gown is just as good as another."

I had been informed, by a friend who had seen them, that, Anna being rigged in all her wedding finery, he had handed her out of a donkey-cart, and attended the church service with her, attired in a blouse. He had no notion of consistency. In the front of his necktie he wore a diamond pin. It had belonged to his grandfather, to whose memory he was much attached. He did not choose to lay the pin aside just because people said it looked ridiculous when worn with his blouse.

Well, time had gone on. Those sisters had been very loving friends till Godfrey and Another had come on the scene, and the last had quarrelled so violently with the first that intercourse was misery. So the poor girls kissed and parted. The marriage had answered very well so far as Godfrey's own happiness was concerned, but Anna naturally wanted to see her relatives, and to say that they all detested and scorned him would be to put the matter mildly ; so poor Anna, when she came to visit her grandmother, heard many righteous judgments delivered against him. I was the only person who took his part. I did not see why he might not be happy in his own way.

I often saw Godfrey and Anna from time to

time, and meant to bring about a meeting for all if possible.

But how to do it?

Godfrey bore no malice, and frequently invited Katharina to come and stay with her sister; but in the winter they travelled abroad, and in the summer they were either living in a barge and slowly going up and down canals, or they were in that tent, or they were sleeping in a van.

However, according to my promise, I set forth to look them up. Really, if one likes to think so, there was no harm in his proceedings.

They were on a long upland heath in Cumberland.

The nearest house was about two miles off. There I could have accommodation.

It was a drawback that Godfrey often had certain followers about him. These were, among others, a tinker (whom I remembered of old, and often saw), his daughter, sometimes his wife (who washed and cooked for Anna on the sly, and took care of her children), and the village choir-master and his wife.

The tinker does errands and attends to Godfrey's donkey. If he and his daughter are not their servants, what are they? Godfrey says

the tinker's mind is full of fresh and interesting thought, and he encourages him to talk.

I do not want to hurt his feelings, but I believe, for my part, he enjoys their society because, whatever he says and does in that tent, his equals are not there to criticise.

He reminds me of some snug little king of an out-of-the-way country that nobody takes any notice of, and who collects his taxes, does his beheadings, and what not, with a cheerful mind, as not afraid of interference.

They were in the enjoyment of delightful weather. We generally have about three weeks of that same when once it sets in. I wrote in haste to my aunt, setting things in the best light, telling her I had taken rooms in a farmhouse, and sent for my Malay boy to bring up the little cob and the phaeton ; said I felt what a Christian act it would be on her part to come and stay with me in the said rooms. So it would be—a most Christian act, for she was wholly in the wrong in that quarrel ; and everybody knows how hard it is for the party that has been wrong to forgive the one that was right.

A Sunday came in, and I strolled out in the evening about seven o'clock to the heath. Oh

the balm of that air ; no such elixir ever enters a house, however widely you may open the windows.

It was still hot enough to make the shadow of the tents pleasant. They were all sitting outside, grouped near a basket-table that stood about a foot high.

I have often noticed how delicious is the taste of tea when taken out of doors. There were boiled eggs and there were cold sausages,—also gooseberries (these from the choir-master's garden) ; and there was plenty of bread and butter. This worthy pair was present. As for the tinker and his daughter, their presence was a matter of course.

I joined them and sat on the grass. They all looked solemn. Godfrey had been talking of the soul, and was now sitting silent, as if lost in thought. They all had an air of edifying solemnity, as if to discourse about the soul must needs be of the very essence of religion.

Then the choir-master, after sighing, exclaimed, "If I could put my hand in my bow-som and take out this beautiful soul, I wonder what it would be like."

" You might not be able to put it back agin," said the tinker, " and then where would you be?"

The force of the literal could, methought, no further go; but his daughter broke in with, "Whenever I think about my soul, it always seems to me as if it was summat like a crab."

"It's an unreasonable thing," quoth the tinker, "for to wish to see it at all."

Yes, I thought it was! almost as unreasonable as the wish of the little girl who, having seen a Lord Mayor's show, wished to order another for the very next day, and declared she could pay for it with her sixpence.

"Because," he continued with pragmatical gravity, "it ain't matter at all, it's *sperit*."

Anna glanced at me with the least little guarded flash of amusement in her eyes, for Godfrey would have been hurt if he had thought us capable of laughing at these sincere expressions of human thought. One man's thought was just as interesting as another's, he always said.

"But there's no harm surely, father," persisted the maiden, "in wishing to know how big it is."

"And it's natural, too," observed the choir-master's wife.

This was appealing to my friend on his most tender point. He can always sympathize if you say a thing is natural. He turned on the woman a look of sincere approval, and it made her

countenance shine ; for she was warm already, and her tea made her more so. She was in her Sunday-best, and had a handkerchief spread over her knees, and was blowing her tea so naturally.

It is natural to wish to be cool. To indulge this wish Godfrey had taken his coat off. His shirt sleeves were rolled up above his elbows, and his trousers were detained above the calves with leather straps.

He could not have appeared in such guise in the simplest rectory drawing-room ; but the choir-master's wife and the tinker's daughter, as modest women as ever breathed, were not particular as to the sort or amount of covering a man had on his arms and legs.

Was he a little fond of preaching ? Yes, I think he was. He discoursed that evening rather strangely ; not that I have not heard such things said in the pulpit, but then the preacher was properly arrayed, and stuck up for us all to gaze at. Besides, you could not interrupt him under pain of being taken up for "brawling ;" whereas, when we interrupted Godfrey, he listened to whomsoever it might be with equal respect,—he did so much desire to be impartial.

I pointed out the advent of the first star; whereupon the choir-master's wife, wishing to say something appreciative concerning those bodies, remarked: "Some people say the stars are like diamonds; but to tell you the truth I think they are much handsomer than any I ever set eyes on." She paused as if for reflection, then added: "And a vast sight larger, by all accounts; at least, so our rector says."

"Rector," grumbled the tinker, "he's not much of a rector, he's got hardly anything to rect. Hows'ever, I like for to hear him speak out bold, and lay about him like a man; for, though I be called a fool, I can find out soon enough when folks try to smooth things away."

"I agree with you, tinker," said Godfrey, "that smoothing away arises from fear of or distaste for the truth, and an attempt, as if for the sake of God, to smother or ignore it. There is a singular partiality in the subjects we choose for religious thought and investigation. Others we shirk, as almost ashamed of them."

"Right you are, Godfrey," answered the tinker; "but I don't hold with what that gentleman said this blessed day in the morning." He pointed at me.

"Well," said Godfrey, "but the smoothing

away you spoke of is often very noticeable as regards the existence and power of evil spirits."

"Ay, sir; but the gentleman made out it were almost as much consequence we should believe in Satan as in the Almighty. Said he, 'our religion drops to pieces without the Evil One.'"

"So it does," said I. "Natural religion does not, but ours is the Christian religion. What does it all mean? What can you make of it without the Evil One?"

"Well, sir, I can make out a good lot in the Bible."

"You can make out almost anything you please, if you pick and choose."

"The Bible is a very extraordinary book," said the tinker, as if his own independent investigations had led him to this conclusion; "and I believe, for my part, and always did, that it is the Word of God."

"Then let it speak for itself. God was our Father, it tells us, and we were naturally good. The Evil One, tempting us, stole us away from God, making us evil too. Our religion, therefore, is our faith in God's plan of warfare with him. The Bible is mainly an account of the means by which we, and the whole creation

which groans and travails together with us, are won back again. In these writings man is not treated like a child. He is exhorted to believe many hard sayings. Many strange and unexpected things are asserted, — things that he never can hope to understand in this life, — and others, that in these days he always wishes to shirk ; but on the other hand God frequently implies that man knows certain things by nature. He, knowing what is implanted in us, alludes to them.

“ This is one of His habits. He not only has great and truly awful reservations with men, but also He takes things for granted. That is, which God takes for granted ; and what He alludes to as within our knowledge, we know.

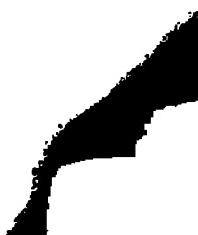
“ It is taken for granted that man knows there are evil spirits, and it is asserted and taught that he is not to have dealings with them. It is taken for granted that he knows the nature of sacrifice. It is asserted and taught that he is not to sacrifice *as* the heathen do.

“ It is taken for granted that he knows of such a thing as possession by evil spirits of human and animal bodies. He is taught that he need no longer fear this, for that Christ came to destroy the works of the Evil One ; and he is

comforted by being taught of another kind of possession,—that by a Holy Spirit to be given to all who ask for it."

By this time several rustics and their sweethearts, strolling that way, had paused to take a look at the tents. Even an Englishman cannot make a castle of his tent. Anna was accustomed to this kind of thing. She produced some hymn-books, and proposed that the now enlarged party should sing some hymns.

The new comers seated themselves. Oh how sweetly, with the choir-master and his wife to lead, they sent up their somewhat rustic praise!



IX.

MY aunt came down to the lodgings I had hired, and then remarked that she should not go to see Godfrey and Anna in the tents till they had, as was proper, paid their respects to her.

Now my aunt has one delightful quality. You can call it obstinacy if you like; but I prefer to say she is not fickle,—she does not change her mind. No amount of arguing makes any difference, so we never argue. Think what a comfort that, with all it implies, must be in a family.

The next morning our changeful English climate was on its best behavior; and I drove Katharina across from that little Cumberland village to her brother-in-law's encampment, which was pitched in Westmoreland.

The English tourist, with his usual partiality, will have nothing to do with certain sweet rural places, while he treads down the grass and makes Echo familiar with bad grammar in

others ; but Echo never contracts bad habits, and, though you cannot educate her, you may depend on her never using any vulgar expression of her own accord.

But these tents,—as we turned the corner of a hill, on an abominably bad road, we saw them pitched on grass which grew in flat spaces, winding in and out among humpy knolls of rich flowering heather.

A van stood a little apart ; beyond it ran a small brook, and made a murmuring as it leaped over the stones. In front was a space of sward, and on the left was a thick hedge with three fine maple trees in it ; and behind that was a tangled wood, with a tumbled world of hills and steep rocky slopes, and then two mountain heads.

Katharina was fascinated.

Anna's tent was rather small,—that is, nine or ten feet by about twelve ; but I knew it was most convenient in its shape and fittings. For instance, besides the usual means of closing it (now fastened back), it had a pair of netted curtains in the opening, to keep out bees and wasps. Wasps will not fly through a netting, though it may be large enough in the mesh to admit them. Then this tent had a folding bed

and a folding floor, besides some very comfortable folding chairs and a small table. Godfrey's tent was like it, only a good deal larger ; and the van was a large one, entered by a little set of steps. It contained, beside their stores, three berths, for there slept in it, besides a girl who acted as nurse, two little boys about six years old. Yes ! they had their children with them ; and these, with a picture-book before them, were lying in the heather upon their chests, nothing being seen of them but their straw hats, and four stout little legs which went up and down in the air almost with the regularity of pendulums.

I saw the girl moving inside the van, and Anna seated on the steps. I rather think she was shelling peas ; but the moment the sisters caught sight of one another Katharina sprang from the carriage, rather frightening my cob, and Anna threw down the basket she held, and ran to meet her. There was a good deal of kissing and patting and innocent delight, which presently attracted Godfrey's attention, and he came slouching up to pay kindly compliments, with his boys on either side of him,— little brown dimpled fellows, with round eyes full of curiosity, and screwed up critical mouths whose

expression had come down direct from the paternal ancestor. Godfrey's dress was not unlike that of a gamekeeper. His large bulging pockets were evidently full of useful things. He stands about six feet two in his stockings, and has large bones. Something almost courtly in his gentleness appeared the more strange when compared with his surroundings, his peculiarly sincere air, countrified garb, and sunburnt face.

Katharina was at first almost shy. When two people meet after uneasy feelings or a quarrel, if one appears wholly at ease, the other is almost obliged to take the air of having been wrong.

Godfrey and I went to take out the cob and tether him, for the tinker and his daughter at that time of day were gone on their rounds. Then we strolled about, leaving the sisters together. A fire was lighted behind the van, and here dinner was in course of being cooked. A shoulder of lamb was stewing in a large earthen pot with a quantity of peas and some young carrots,—a cup of milk and a lump of butter making all the liquid, excepting its own gravy. Another pan was turned over it. Then, in a skillet, potatoes were cooking; and in another, a currant and raspberry pudding.

A table was presently set, well under the

shade of the maple trees. When the sisters advanced to it I saw what a contrast Katharina presented to the rest of the party. The cockney girl, who waited on us, gazed at her open-mouthed. Godfrey had much objected to this young person's dining apart, but she insisted that she could not enjoy her victuals if she had to eat them with her "missis." So when his insistence on equality became tyranny, and caused rebellion and tears, he gave way.

Nobody minded eating with Godfrey, of course ; and they all addressed him by the Christian name, according to order. Jerome and Georgie sat on the grass. Our table not being large enough for them, each had a wooden stool placed across his stout little legs, and on that his plate was set.

I am bound to say that this was a very agreeable meal, and the admiration of the little boys for their unknown aunt was pretty to see.

They kept turning up their little inquisitive faces to watch the unbuttoning of her long gloves. Then they were interested in the delicate hand, with certain rings that sparkled on it. She was a creature fresh from a house. The general effect of her dress was pink and white, and the sun had not made free with it ; but she

was not clad for the moors, and everything about her, like her own figure, was supple and soft.

“She’s just come out of a house,” was the remark of one small boy to the other; and they appeared to think this a romantic circumstance.

Anna was brown; her teeth looked all the whiter for this.

I felt that I had done a good action in bringing the sisters together.

They were as happy as queens till tea-time, sitting with the little boys at their feet. Meanwhile Godfrey and I took a ramble to look after certain wild creatures who would, I knew, be in the neighborhood. Very few people have the least idea what wild creatures are like. Their notion generally is to shoot them, and then pick them up for examination; which is just the same thing as if some being of superior race, coming here and seeing children playing on a village green, were to shoot a few at long range, and then turn them over and describe them, and consider himself learned in their structure, habits, and appearance.

We may suppose such a sportsman bagging this game; and being painted, by the artists of his race, sitting on a sofa or what not, and

having a few dead children (in braces) tumbled beside him for ornament,— just as we daily have grouse and hares and snipes represented in our pictures.

But to proceed,— wild birds, excepting when they have young in the nest, feed mainly in the morning and the evening. If you settled yourself, for only two or three weeks, in a cottage or a tent on a green down, or by a wooded dingle, taking care to tie up your dog excepting in the middle of the day, you might—by putting forth such seeds as they love, and a little crock of water—get visits from almost every kind of wild bird in the neighborhood.

Oh, how people do love the country, and yearn after it! All townsfolk do, particularly Londoners.

At least, they say they do ; but they say they really must give dinner parties, and they are as good as their word.

And they say they should so like to see the long-tailed tit going out to his dinner party with his wife and his eight children after him,— the tail of each looking like one long pursuing feather, while they stand upside down under the branch as often as not, and then dart like baby meteors away ; but Londoners hardly ever do

see the long-tailed tit, and if you ask them why, they are confused and tell you that the long-tailed tit is a rare bird.

No, you duffers in London are bereft of almost everything worth mentioning ; and that is partly, indeed mainly, because you will have what other people have if you possibly can, and you will live as other people do.

You must have servants forsooth, and look at the consequence of that ; you cannot afford a fine telescope, or even microscope.

You must go into society ; and the consequence is, you cannot afford to have a houseboat on the river, or even a yacht on the coast.

You must have a carriage, so you cannot have a good library.

Or you must have carpets on your floors, and your wife must have silk gowns ; so you cannot afford so much as a comfortable barge in which to enjoy your six weeks' holiday with your wife and brood.

Why, with half the money you squandered on new carpets for your stairs you might have set up a tent and a donkey-cart. Think of that !

But the old carpet, you say, was almost in rags.

Then why was n't it taken up, and the stairs washed and left bare ?

If you did that, you say, people would think you so poor.

And they do as it is ; they always know whether their friends are well off or not.

But you don't want a donkey-cart, and you do not wish to prowl about in a barge or live in a tent ; you will go to the seaside, and walk on the parade and hear the band.

Very well then, — you cannot see the long-tailed tit.

However, there is no doubt much to be seen in cities or their immediate outskirts, if you know how to look ; but it is always more difficult to see things when you do not expect them than when you do.

Unless you have three eyes you will not see much ; for the mind's eye is a great institution, and hugely helps those of which most of us have a pair.

An ingenuous London cousin of mine, staying with me last year, was much taken with that yellow-coated fairy, the willow-warbler. He soon learned to distinguish her from the chiff-chaff, about which latter bird he was very enthusiastic. Her slender smallness, her darting flight, her modest skill in clearing insects from the leaf, her pretty talk, — chiff-chaff-chiff-cheff-

chaff. How charming ! He had not thought there was so small a bird in England. Beside her, even the wren was bulky. He had never heard her note before.

He went home to his house in Addison Road, Kensington. He had told me there were only sparrows, starlings, and an occasional robin to be seen in his garden ; but the next day, going forth into it in company with a neighbor who was somewhat of a naturalist, he heard that note again, and felt that he could not be mistaken. There are many good-sized trees in his and the adjacent gardens. Some fine plane trees grew along his own wall. He stole under the largest and stood a few moments in excited observation. Something flitted and was silent ; something shook a leaf where all others were still ; "and presently," said he, "the fairy finch" (she's not a finch, though) "darted higher up the boughs, shaking her yellowish green wings, and made her little speech, and was not seen."

"Why, that was a chiff-chaff," he exclaimed excitedly. "Yes," said the neighbor, who had been calmly looking on ; "there were two last summer, but I do not think they built near here. They did the year before."

"He might have been talking of two spar-

rows or two cats," said my cousin, "he was so dispassionate; but as for me, I never was so surprised in my life,—never."

In the middle of September several willow-warblers came to his garden and stayed more than a week. They were on their way to the South. Moral: *There are more things in a suburban garden than a citizen dreams of in his philosophy.*

The most moral and excellent birds are those who, in this beautiful fashion, keep themselves to themselves. Trees and thickets are their houses, and they live inside as a rule, and do not sit on the most conspicuous twigs any more than people in London sit habitually on their doorsteps.

One often finds curious mistakes made, even on the commonest matters, in natural history. I can easily fancy that if a naturalist from the sun could come down here to shoot specimens for museums, and could procure a grenadier in his busby, with his wife and child, the Sunnians might find it hard to think of the one as mate to the other; but we ought to know better than to make mistakes about the commonest of our wild birds.

We all know, for instance, what the chaffinch

is like; but why do we talk of green linnets? Because in the autumn we see numbers of beautiful little soft-billed birds of an olive-green color, with broad white bands on the wings and tail, and we call them green linnets. If we called them hen chaffinches, with their young of the year, it would be more to the purpose; for the cock and hen chaffinch are in general almost as unlike as the supposed grenadier and his wife, all the young, females as well as males, being exactly like the mother. Most books on birds, while admonishing the reader that there is but one true linnet, do not take the trouble to add this easily remembered fact.

All the wild birds may be known from sparrows by their flight. Some go in swift undulations, and all dart about with a more graceful and capable use of their wings. That bustling cit flies with fussy labored jerks, as if its little crop was fuller of stolen man's meat than was good for it.

Sparrows are hereditary paupers. None of them get their own living. Beggars and scamps, they never think of setting up housekeeping for themselves as good working-birds do. They must be with man and nowhere else, for they are essentially the creatures of civilization. Who, indeed, ever heard of a wild sparrow?

Even in the more mountainous and sparsely inhabited parts of Scotland, where a bird has to do a day's pecking for a day's meat, we do not find them.

I was talking to a keeper not long ago within a few miles of Pitlochry.

He had not met with the bird.

"What color will she be?" he asked.

"Brown, to be sure."

"And will she be the size of a doo? or will she be larger?"

However, though I am not pleased with the sparrow, I testify that even he does accidentally more good than harm; but if people say he does it from a sense of duty, or even if they say he has any moral sense at all, I cannot go with them. I think he has not. As for the other birds,—including the kestrel, who eats our mice for us,—their actions are so beneficent that it is rather mean of us to say these do not spring from a high motive. Snails, slugs, grubs, beetles, spiders, aphids, tadpoles, moths, no doubt feel it hard that man should begin to tolerate the birds in a garden, but that is selfish of the snails, slugs, grubs, beetles, spiders, aphids, tadpoles, moths, etc.; and even though the motives of the birds should be no higher than

those of man, I can only say that I would not snare a nightingale to save the life of the largest grub that was ever hatched. If we would let the birds alone they would eat a few raspberries and peck at our ripe apples, but then, there would be three times as many at which to peck ; whereas now, our fruit and flowers are riddled with the ravages of insects. As for our rose trees, we expect to find blight upon them just as much as, if we went to see the Bruce's cave, we should expect to be shown the spider. The cave, in fact, would not be complete without the spider ; but the rose would be considerably more complete without the blight, and I sometimes see it so ; but then I encourage the blue tit and other of my friendly visitors.

Well, this is an unconscionably rambling Ramble. I took it in company with Godfrey and a robin who was quite troublesome to us from his familiarity. He would come when Godfrey whistled to him and "partake of our victuals ;" but he would not go, and as he flitted about he had an air of authority and supervision,—sometimes standing right in the path as if he thought he could bar it to us, sometimes startling us with a shrill admonitory song from some bramble close to our elbows.

When we caught sight of the tents there was a kettle boiling on a fire of sticks.

"Wherever we are my dear Anna always expects to have her afternoon tea," observed Godfrey in a tone of kindly regret, "and sometimes this gives her and us a good deal of trouble."

"She has given up a great deal that is more important," I replied.

"But I could wish to see her more reasonable," said Godfrey. "There I must allow that the two sexes are not equal, men are so vastly more reasonable than women."

"Vastly more," I repeated with cordiality; "there is nothing like the reasonableness of men. Look at soldiers, for instance. Though they may have been marching for hours, yet if they catch sight of the enemy, drawn up ready to give them battle, you never hear of their expecting to halt and have hot grog served out all round before they go into action. There can be no doubt, though, that it would be a comfort under such circumstances. Then an explorer or a hunter in the backwoods, far from the haunts of men,—does he ever cry out for his warm bath before he turns in? Not at all. He may have been swimming in all sorts of luxury, but he

I am not reasonable, it appears to my own mind, for when I approached the tea-table and found the tinker present, helping to bring bits of wood to the fire and evidently expecting to share the meal, I said the low sun shone unpleasantly into the eyes of the ladies, and proposed that they should have their tea inside Anna's tent and that I should wait on them.

On Sunday the tinker had cleaned himself up, and I did not object to him. His hair, also, had been neatly raked down over his forehead.

Now it was different. Anna, of course, must do as her husband pleases ; but why must Katharina listen to the tinker's talk ?

If I was desirous to heap up unanswerable questions I might add, "And why is my Malay boy to be spoilt by chronic idleness and the charms of the little flaxen-haired cockney, who retires affectedly behind the van whenever he appears ?" Yes, I thought that evening, when I saw her playing her little part, "You petty thing, you very small feminine highflyer, — why don't you find an empty chrysalis to creep into, or the drifting shell of a thrush's egg, if you want so much to hide ?"

Well, I drove Katharina back after a happy and successful day ; and she gave her grand-

mother a glowing account of life in the encampment.

“And what do they do when it rains?”

“Anna says they do not care much about rain ; they hardly notice it.”

“There are sometimes cold days ; what then?”

“They sit in the van.”

“The van, my dear ?”

“Yes, there is as much accommodation in it as in a first-class railway carriage. People often sit almost all day in one of those, and eat in it too.”

“On a journey,—yes.”

“Godfrey painted the van up last week,—painted it yellow and picked it out with red.”

“Poor creature ! Poor misguided man !”

“It was green. He painted it yellow, that when he had been away in the evening it might be more conspicuous, more easily found in the dusk.”

The next day Godfrey and Anna, with their boys, came to pay their respects, and all parties were so careful that things passed off very well, though Godfrey had a Holland coat on, and the boys wore paper caps which their father had made for them. Gloves are useless in hot weather,—none of them wore gloves ; and

blacking is a mere ornament,—their boots were not blacked. But there was a glow of health about them which made the grandmother look all the more faded, and gave Katharina the air of a delicate greenhouse flower.

The parting was cordial; and Anna was delighted to receive a specially pretty lamp, duly encased in glass, and warranted to burn in a draught and give no trouble. I drove her home with this property, and the rest of the party walked.

So far, I shall show this to Katharina; for the remainder, I think not. Then why do I record it? Why, indeed!

“It’s more than six months since that base fellow, Another, wrote to Katharina,” said Anna. We all call him Another. I never mean to call him anything else.

“I had no notion it was so long,” was my answer.

“What is to be done?” she next said.

“Done!” I replied, “what can be done till he moves? He has the game in his own hand.”

“It was good of you to bring her here,” Anna observed; “she did so long for a confidential talk with me. She has been telling me about

it, and how coldly he writes. I am sure he is tired of the engagement."

"I wonder she is not tired of it too," I answered hotly.

"Oh," said Anna, "then you think she is not tired of it?"

"I am sure she is not; otherwise, why is she so different from her old joyous self? No, I do not think she is breaking her heart about it, but I think she walks now in the shadow and not in the sunshine."

"Do you know," said Katharina the next morning, while we were waiting for her grandmother to come down to breakfast,—"do you know that Anna is becoming almost as odd as Godfrey? There is no end to the things that she does not care about and sees no good in."

"For instance?"

"*For instance*,—money, of all things in the world. She does not see why exchanging would not do just as well!"

"Then she can change the opal ring I gave her when she was married, for as many as she is likely to want while the tinker holds her. but if I am to do without money, I must give the tinker when he holds her."



" You might choose for him some other appropriate tribute."

" But one may easily be impertinent with one's tribute. A small manual on English grammar would be an appropriate present for the tinker, but it would be rude to give it,—just as rude as it would be to give a polecat a bottle of attar of roses."

" Oh well, I think Anna was only half in earnest; but I am sure she meant it when she said she never took any kind of jewelry about with her, or had even her gold watch or money in her pocket when living in the tents,—because, if Godfrey chanced to be out of sight, she sometimes felt unprotected and in danger when tramps went by."

" Hence her contentment in the companionship of the tinker's family. There she touched on a weak point in tent life. It is never safe to make one's self remote in a thickly settled country. For a family to step forth from the shelter of a house is as if a nut should insist on being cracked and laid on the grass, to be free from the restraint of its shell."

" All Godfrey's ways are perfectly ridiculous."

" But the thought that lies at the root of them is a good one. The luxury of the few is one

chief cause of the poverty of the many. He wants to return to a more primitive mode of life,—partly that money may be set free by this plan for helping the helpless, and partly to discover whether there is not a happier mode than the one he has been used to. It cost the human race very many generations to learn the advantages of money over barter, and of a settled life over a wandering one. It is truly ridiculous to want to give up money and houses; but perhaps his would not be a perfectly hopeless quest who should set himself to discover a way for using both better. In one sense Anna cannot be called a helpmeet for Godfrey. She simply lets him play these vagaries, instead of which she ought to help him to make some good thing out of them."

Katharina laughed rather mischievously.

"Jack," she said, "are you sure you shall be pleased if she does help him?"

I was silent. "I have thought a good deal about your Woman's Rights, myself, lately," she continued; "and you know, Jack, something must be done."

"What ridiculous scheme has Anna got in her mind now," I exclaimed; but Katharina said not another word, partly because her grand-

mother at that moment came down to breakfast.

Poor old grandmother! She is much to be pitied, one main source of her revenue having completely failed. Katharina has ninety pounds a year settled on her, and no more. The grandmother has long foreseen that her own income, excepting an annuity of little more than the same sum, would eventually fail. She used to say she hoped it would last her time. It will not do so; at least I hope not, for it comes to an end with this year, when, strangely enough, the lease of her house expires also.

X.

NOW it had been intended that the day following, my aunt should pay her visit to the tents, but a strange dog overturned the canvas shade which served for a larder, and gnawed the contents, after which he played at pitch and toss with what remained ; so it behoved Godfrey to take the donkey and cart to the nearest village, stopping, on his way, at our lodgings to postpone this visit.

But I walked over to the tents with Katharina ; and the sisters spent the day together.

Did I say it was a strange dog who ate the provisions ? So it was ; a perfectly strange dog to them. The fact is, it was my dog. I brought him out and gave him to Anna, for it made me nervous to think how often she sat in the tent when the tinker and his daughter were away and Godfrey out of ear-shot ; for he was a very absent man, and would wander forth and lose himself in thought, leaving it possible for any passing tramp to rob the tents, rifle the larder,

and frighten the dame. As for the little boys, who generally trotted at their father's heels, they were too young to be of the slightest use. The youngest, a dimpled imp five years old, had been presented by Katharina with a bow and arrows, and he appeared to think, so far as we could judge by his actions, that some small white clouds, lying about in various directions, were the right things to take aim at,— and stick the arrows into if that was at all feasible.

Anna was delighted to welcome my dog, and Godfrey with great candor admitted that he was a most useful present.

My Malay boy brought his kennel, and it was intended that for some days he should be tied up ; but circumstances were too much for that dog, and, read by their light, it is evident that he was demoralized. He felt as if the restraints of civilization were out of place there, and he ought to do as he liked ; so he slipped his collar, and, when first observed at his unseemly gambols, appeared to be having a kind of waltz with a dead duck.

I left the sisters together, and, sitting down on a knoll, pursued my own thoughts, dotting them down as they occurred. They are already modified by the fact that I am a literary character,

and by the chances opened to me by the writing of this book.

For anything I know I am one of the celebrated men of futurity.

This book, still in my own power, and which no one can force me to finish unless I please, may be a subject of investigation, curiosity, and controversy thousands of years hence ; and yet I am not at all sure that on the chance of this any publisher would give me more for it now, so short-sighted is man.

I think I see the *savans* of the future poring over my lucubrations,—fixing grammar by my phrases, and finding the sites of old towns by my measure. They will spend much learning and acuteness over “the uncertainties surrounding” my aunt’s Christian name. They will try to evolve this out of their own internal consciousness, for I have fully made up my mind that they shall never know it from me; no, nor the name of Another. They will dig up and steam a copy of my book as if it was a papyrus. They will argue and fall out over my account of Katharina. They will naturally discover that she was god-daughter to a queen—the wife of one Henry, of the eighth dynasty. Others will dispute this, proving that she did not live till fifteen hundred

years after his time. It will be just like the Egyptian researches over again ; and I dare say that, as in that case, they will not differ as to dates more than about three thousand years or so.

It pleases me beforehand to think of their puzzles ; but I do not intend to arrogate to myself any present honor from the fame of my book in the future. I can wait.

But now I consider the matter, there may not be much waiting. A year will see this book out, — and who knows ?

I may "wake one morning and find,"—etc. Then the "society papers" in England will tell. They will tell the Christian names of all the ladies of my family ; tell that I wear an eyeglass, that I have a great dislike to roast pig, that I am not descended from William the Norman, that my father was not a chimney-sweep, that I am "of gentlemanly manners and appearance," etc. I shall then go to America to lecture, as is now the fashion. The New York Herald, the Boston Daily Advertiser, the New York Tribune, the Boston Daily Globe, and other papers will send to interview me. Their readers will know whether or not I wear paper collars, whether I prefer cold salmon or

hot cockles, whether as a rule I stand most on my feet, or my head, or my dignity. I shall like all that.

Well, I do not want to balk myself. It certainly appears proper to encourage this fine flow of ideas, but I should like to know how long I am going on in this way!

Not very long, as the sequel shows. A howl as from a small boy, then a sob, and presently little Jerome came limping up with a shoe in one hand, and some large tears coursing down his cheeks.

"What's the matter, Five-years-old?"

"Mother's love,—and will you?—Oh, it does so hurt!"

"Your foot? Why, what have you done to it?"

"A bumble-bee *stinged* it." He sat down and pulled off his sock; and when he saw the parlous bump on his instep he sobbed again: "I was looking at her when she went down her hole, and then I just put a little bit of grass in, and she flew out and—and *stinged* me [sob]—and it hurts."

"Come, come,—you must n't blubber; you must be a man."

There are few things that get the better of

me more than a child's tears. They seem to open up the whole question of human pain and want and sorrow. Oh, what a great question that is!

Is not my own sorrow, my own want, my own pain enough, that I must needs suffer for the whole? Why must we all suffer? And if the answer to that question is hidden, what shall we do with the next, for our answer to it is one main part of our probation here? "How much," it runs, "of what man suffers is his appointed lot, and how much is the work or the fault or the mistake of his fellow-man?"

"Do you know why you are here, you little Jerome? No! I will answer for you,—you do not; nor that it is the travails of the human conscience that have brought about for you this dinnerless day. It is because so many are sunk in poverty that riches burn your father's hand,—because so many lie under rotten roofs that he cares for no roof at all. We don't know what to be at,—such of us as think of these things,—for to remedy accomplished wrong does not breed a right; and that is why you are here, and how you came to tickle the bee in her hole, and she stung you. Do you know what I mean?"

"No." Another sob.

"That's a good boy,—I knew you did n't."

And so then the sock was put on, and the message given: "Mother's love,—and will you come and have some bread and cheese and ginger beer, because it will be a long time before dinner's ready."

It was a long time before dinner was ready. It seemed as if the great-grandmother was never to see Jerome and Georgie and her grandson-in-law camping out; Anna scraping potatoes; Godfrey leading his chosen life,—spoiling good books by forgetting them and leaving them out for the dew to fall on them, also spoiling the cutlery. It was part of Godfrey's elected service to clean the knives. Most of them were rusty.

There was a good deal of waste in that tent-hold,—nothing, of course, compared with the waste caused by servants in every ordinary household, but more obvious. What then? The experiment caused talk,—an amount of talk quite remarkable. No sensible people could possibly wish to try it for themselves; but to meet with healthy and happy persons who had rooted themselves up, at least for the summer, and were going without so many of the comforts and luxuries of life, partly if not chiefly for their

own pleasure, had a certain effect all over that neighborhood.

They are unchristian and even inhuman who do not pity the poor and try to help them. In our degree we almost all do this; but, as a rule, we pour in our benefactions at the wrong end of the scale. We should try most to help those who may be called the very highest of the poor, rather than those who are in every way the lowest. A great part of what these highest poor want is moral help. I am not thinking now of the poor who work for wages and spend them week by week, and have sufficient during youth and health and then succumb when old age draws on or sickness strikes them. It is not only for them that the tender-hearted may well weep.

There are those who earn their money by the quarter who feel the pinching of poverty quite as keenly; and yet, though for many of them life is now too hard, and they faint and sink under the weight of it, they might dwell in peace, have comfortable food and shelter, some domestic and intellectual pleasure, some agreeable sojourns in country places, if it were not that the tyranny of custom is so strong. It is a power that the weak of the world cannot break.

In a city there will often be found whole streets full of such people. They are just as well educated, and often as well connected, as folks who are rich; and they are all struggling, never having really enough of any one thing,—struggling “to keep themselves respectable,” to get their children taught and clothed, putting the best on the outside and ashamed that even this should be so shabby. These want moral help.

Nobody but Godfrey would propose that they should live without houses over their heads. They could not afford it. But their houses should have stained floors instead of carpets. The kitchens should have clean little cooking-stoves instead of the wasteful open range, and the inhabitants should know how to cook. The rich and idle having taken it into their heads to go to cooking-classes for their own amusement, the most timid of the poor may now take heart and dare to cook their own dinner. I am an indifferent good cook myself; therefore I speak with authority. I can boil an egg, roast an apple, and bake a potatoe with any man; and I say, out of the fulness of my knowledge, that it is a great mistake not to eat the article where it was cooked,—that is, in the kitchen. When

my chum and I cooked game over a fire in the backwoods, we never moved apart to devour it. I have been very hungry in that paradise, Tasmania. When we had caught a fine fat trout we cooked it on hot stones, and ate it then and there. Therefore, you that are struggling should have your meals, or most of them, in the kitchen,—a nice cheerful kitchen.

“What, with the servant?”

“Oh, I am so frightened! I don’t think I dare say it. I wish to insinuate,—in short, you must consider that I have lived a good deal among outlandish tribes and in desert places,—I think you don’t want a servant!

“Then who is to answer the door?”

I have a good deal of house property in London, property in just such houses as I describe; and (would you believe it?) when, being in a confidential humor, I talked over some of the troubles of human life with a pleasant careworn gentlewoman who lived in one of them, she admitted that there was nothing in the house she could not do with pleasure; but she must have a servant,—else “who was to answer the door?”

“It would be bad for your health to answer it yourself?”

She scorned the question. "No, but sometimes people come to call!"

"So you pay about forty-five pounds a year, the difference between comfort and poverty, chiefly that these callers may have a maid-of-all-work to answer the door for them instead of a gentlewoman."

The woman or the man who first invented servants deserves our thanks. Of course if they are good ones- they always get the better of us, as is but right ; but it is rather hard if they are also to get the better of those to whom it would be a great stroke of good luck to be without them, and who have been known to think so.

Here, perhaps, I had better address the reader, in order that mistakes may be avoided. You would hardly think, probably, if I did not tell you, that I consider myself to have been, on the whole,— though it is true that I ramble,— discussing the subject of Woman's Rights ever since I began it ; but I find it a slippery thing to get hold of, and partly because I am not used to writing for the public, and partly on account of my chivalrous respect for the sex, which makes it most distasteful to me to find fault, I do not seem to get on as I could wish. I should also like my house property to let better ; but

this motive for pushing on the matter must be a subordinate one, as the sequel will assuredly prove.

I went to eat bread and cheese, and draw the corks of the ginger beer bottles, as before said ; and it was in consequence of the discourse I then heard between Anna and her sister that I wrote the foregoing remarks, for they had been reading my chapter on Woman's Rights, and laughing at it.

N. B. What most people call Woman's Rights I call Woman's Duties,—rights and duties in this case being convertible terms.

I made some remark of this kind, on which the matron said : " Well, it is all very proper to laugh at, Jack, but I am determined not to be made ridiculous for nothing. Godfrey has simply *undone* a good many things in our lives at present ; but now I mean him to *do* a good many things, and Jack will have to help."

" You had better help him yourself ; the help now must come from women."

" O yes, from women," said the maid, " but not from a woman. Jack does not really think that you can help, Anna, or that I can."

" I have made a scheme," said Anna with a decisive air of superiority.

Now when I say that some of these pages are the direct result of my cogitations on Anna's scheme, the reader will at once know what sort of a scheme it was.

"We want to talk to you about those two houses of yours in such and such a road," she began.

I shall not specify the part of London in which those two houses stood, further than by saying that it was particularly unfashionable. It was a wide road on a rising ground, and it was somewhere between the Baker-street Station of the Metropolitan Railway and the "Angel" at Islington.

"You are going to let those two houses to us," continued Anna, "or rather to me; and you will allow me to break two doors in the wall between them, one on the ground floor and one in the floor over the drawing-room. Godfrey is always talking about 'voluntary descent.' I am tired of those words; but I have begun to think that if he could truly descend for a part of the day he would be as happy as a prince, and would enjoy himself like a man of education during the remainder. But I must help him. He would never have thought of such a scheme for himself, or for the two houses into

something between a boarding-house and a lodging-house. We shall have no servants. I shall superintend. Godfrey shall clean the knives and shoes for all the inmates,—also carry up the coals and go the errands. Katharina will answer the door."

"Katharina — answer — the door!"

"Don't shout, Jack."

"Katharina answer the door at a charity concern!"

"Don't shout, Jack," repeated Katharina. "I never saw such a noble air of indignation on your manly visage before. Yes,—this is the direct result of your talk and teaching on Woman's Rights. We are going to reform the world."

"I have no patience with such nonsense. However, you are not in earnest, of course."

"Yes, we are; but it is not going to be a charity concern,—very much the contrary. I must do something after Christmas, of course."—

"Those are good houses," interrupted Anna. "London has long overtaken them, and you know you told us yourself that they were thrown on your hands and were a loss to you because they stand back, as the other houses do, in narrow gardens. When the leases of the other houses fall in, a row of shops will be run out into

their gardens ; but you may not build till this occurs."

I began to be almost afraid that they were in earnest, and I only answered, "Nonsense!"

"This is how we are always met," said Katharina demurely. "It is the old story. They say we cannot organize ; and then they say 'Nonsense!' when we do."

"But it is going to be done, Jack," said Anna.

"Not in my houses,—"

Katharina broke into the discourse again here. "O yes, Jack, in yours ! You must have the courage of your opinions, you know. He is often talking about new lights breaking upon his mind, Anna. I used to think of Jack's mind, when I was a little girl, as if it must be riddled through and through by the holes those lights had made. It is odd, after all these years, that there is not light enough inside it to show him the merits of our scheme." She stopped to laugh, and then went on. "You will have the floors of those houses stained for us, no doubt, and every day except Sunday I shall sweep them down with a long broom from top to bottom."

"This is the direct outcome of your own notions," repeated Anna.

So Godfrey was to be cured by "a heir of the dog that bit him." Pardon my bad spelling. Was I that dog? Well, I am afraid I put a good many of his ideas into his head, but I had no suspicion then where they would lead him.

"This scheme will oblige Godfrey to settle and root himself again," continued Anna; "and you know you say often that it is a disastrous thing to have no roots."

"Excepting for islands," said Katharina.

I had remarked the previous day that if islands had no roots we might (I was thinking specially of the sister island) — we might tow them out if we took our whole navy to the task. We might anchor that particular island in the midst of the Atlantic, or moor her to the United States. What a blessed thing that would be for — the States?

"One of those is a really nice house," said Anna. "Two large sitting-rooms on the ground floor, — a dining-room and a drawing-room, — one on either side the street door; and two nice rooms behind them, looking into a square garden. Above these are five bedrooms, all good; and above again there are three tolerably comfortable attics. Then below, only half underground, there are good kitchen-offices, and there is a

capital room, with a boarded floor, which might be used as a nursery or work-room, and there is an eating-room. Then, next door is the other house two stories higher, of the common London type, much newer, and yet I should think seventy or eighty years old,—a ten-roomed house. As the houses are in such an utterly old-fashioned locality, the low one lets for ninety-five pounds a year, and the high for sixty-five. With taxes, you told me they would cost the occupants two or three pounds less than three hundred a year, both together. I shall have no carpets or curtains, and you will have to stain the floors. I mean to have nine sets of people in them, all precisely equal,—such people as now pay about fifty pounds a year for rent, without rates and taxes, or for lodgings, and most of whom have one or two servants; and they will all soon be rich instead of being miserably poor, only—”

“ Only,” I prompted her, finding that she paused.

And she went on, “ Only they will have their sitting-rooms in common, and will have their meals together. No doubt they will sit in their bedrooms, however, a good deal, just as people do in a French hotel.”

Here she held up her hand, and began to count on her fingers. "I thought first of having ten sets of people. The tens in three hundred are thirty. What are the nines in three hundred, Katharina?"

O these fair creatures; how unbusiness-like they are! Katharina did not answer.

"Well, *we'll say ten*. Then each set will have to pay thirty pounds for rent and taxes. There are sixteen bedrooms in all, for all the rooms in the high house will be bedrooms."

Here Katharina, who had been making a calculation in her own mind, enriched the conversation with a remark essentially feminine.

"It would make it much easier if you said you would have eight sets of people. That would come to thirty-eight pounds ten, for each set to pay for rent and rates and taxes, and there would be two bedrooms for each." She added with great naïveté,—"and there would not be so many to quarrel."

"I think it will come to pass, Jack," said Anna persuasively.

"Do you really?" I exclaimed. "Well, I must go now and fetch your grandmother." And I left them abruptly. Katharina answered the door!

XI.

WELL, I called this a book without beginning, and now it shows signs of going on without end. It certainly was not intended to chronicle the doings of two feminine plotters against cooks and housemaids, for such I perceive to be the gist of Anna's scheme.

I set forth to fetch their grandmother, for the dinner was to be ready in an hour,—that is, about five o'clock; and the air being ominously warm still, and yet rather damp (though we had had no rain), I expected a break in the weather, and thought her visit must take place at once if it took place at all. Take place it did. All went off well at first; for, surprised as the old lady was at the ménage, her position as guest made it imperative on her to be civil.

“Well, Jack,” said Katharina, when she found opportunity to speak to me apart, “Anna gets on fast. I am sure the scheme will answer. I feel quite zealous about it.”

“You could not have a worse symptom,—

surtout point de zèle, as I say to my old watch every night when I wind her up. Why, she goes so fast in her zeal for work that she gains a good hour in every twenty-four ; and what does she get by it ? Neither thanks nor help, for I regularly put her back."

" You had better let us try the thing in your houses," answered Katharina ; " if not I think it will be tried in somebody else's. Why, where is grandmother to go, and where am I to go ? "

" It will be Godfrey's duty to give his wife's grandmother a comfortable home if her own has to be broken up ; and you — "

She interrupted : " And I ? Surely I am at least fit to answer a door and do errands."

" You are much more fit to be a good fellow's wife. You seem to me quite to forget Another."

I never omit an opportunity to mention Another ; it is a point of honor with me. I may have particular reasons, but if so they are nothing, reader, to you.

Oh, how she sighed ; and then she made slowly and thoughtfully an answer that my heart ached to hear.

" Jack, it is more than a year now since we were first aware that grandmother would lose her

property ; and I felt, I mean I was sure, that what she had always said she should leave to me and my sisters counted somewhat with — ”

“ With Another ? ” I asked in a low voice. I was shocked for her, and wondered what was coming next.

She sighed again, and seemed to be looking earnestly at the dark blue rims of the hills. An unwonted touch of the rose was spread on her cheek and was infinitely becoming to her.

“ I did it for the best,” she faltered, and turned away her face with an air of beautiful shame. “ I mean I did not write at first to tell him, because he owed me a letter,—and I hardly know how it is. It cannot surely be his doing; but when I have in past years written twice to his once, I have always been made to feel that he was surprised.”

I wished at that moment that he had been there. The savage in me, or what divines call the Old Adam, asserted itself, and testified that it would be sweet to kick him.

She went on.

“ And so I waited, only on that account ; and when I did write, of course I mentioned it and said when we had first heard it, and I expressed my regret on his account. Then he,— O Jack,

he wrote almost directly, and again he was surprised, and said so. He was disappointed that I should have known this for months and not have told it to him."

There was a touching humility in Katharina's manner.

"Mean hound!" I muttered under my breath ; and I hope she did not hear me, for she seemed to be deprecating any blame for him, and she tried to excuse him further. "A long engagement is a great drag to a man. He has given to ours five of the best years of his life."

"So have you," I answered.

"Of course!" she said, as if any drag it might have been to her was hardly worth mentioning. Then suddenly rousing up, and speaking as if almost in spite of herself, she exclaimed : "But the hint that I had concealed my loss of a future fortune hurt me as if it had been a sting,"— then checking herself she went on : "But I did not tell him so. I wrote as gently as I could."

Could this be Katharina ?

"And he has not answered ?" was all I could find to say in reply.

"No, and in the mean time inaction and uncertainty make me feel miserable ; and if you can let Anna have those houses —"

" You think it would be a pleasant change for you to live in a dull neighborhood in London, and answer a house-bell ; but what do you suppose Another would think ? Will he approve when he returns ? "

Katharina, with a facility which showed how little she had thought on the matter, gave up that part of her plan at once. " We need not have any answering of the door. Anna says the low house has a vestibule shut in with glass doors. We might have a brass plate outside under the visitors' bell, and engraved on it : ' Ring, then enter and shut the door.' We could keep the glass door locked. On hearing the bell it would be the business of some one to go and unlock it and let in the visitor, who would then be in the vestibule. For all parcels and things for the kitchen there would be the kitchen door. The thing we should most want would be a lift. Will there be a lift ? "

" Probably, if I let Godfrey take the houses and he makes one. Has the scheme been mentioned to him ? "

" Not yet. Anna thought it better to say nothing till she had thought the thing out, or decided on all the people. She has made sure of some to whom she spoke last spring."

Then Katharina mentioned our friend F.'s sister, a widow with small means, mother of the chubby-faced boy. Her husband had been a benevolent physician whose practice had brought him in little beyond the blessings of the poor, unless you like to count the presumable blessing of heaven. Anna had discussed the scheme with F. He was much taken with it, perhaps because his sister was living beyond her income. He urged that it should be begun at once, and wanted to force it on.

"Habit that, nothing but habit," said I. "He forced strawberries last spring ; and when I said they were better in their season, he pitied me and forced a smile."

Then she mentioned a curate, an old friend. Let us call him John Blank. He was married ; his wife had about one hundred a year ; and they were both *tamed* by narrow means, four children, and constant intercourse with the wretched. What a jolly young fellow he once was ! I remember his telling me, when we were lads, that once when living in London his purse was stolen, and he knew not what to do till he bethought himself of a certain beggar to whom he had often given pence ; so he went to the beggar's beat and borrowed a sovereign of him,

promising to return it next day, which he did. Then the beggar with a twinkle in his eye said, "Is there any *think* else I can do for you, sir?" And I said, "No," quoth Blank, "unless he would remember me in his will."

I often see him now in his cups, "swelling visibly" (as Dickens would express it) at afternoon tea, for he is a total abstainer, and a most intemperate one; though certainly there is nothing in his drink to excite him, for, as the clerk of his church remarked, "You can liquor up, but you cannot water up."

So our friend F.'s sister, with the chubby-faced boy who attended King's College School, were to make up the first set of inmates, and John Blank and his family the second set. The third would be Katharina and her grandmother. From this latter they would get plenty of advice gratis. All these people were perfectly well acquainted with one another. The fourth set would be Godfrey and his family.

You may often flatter yourself that you know something of your grown-up fellow-mortals, but children are destined to be always surprising. Little Jerome surprised me after that very conversation with Katharina. He came and sat beside us with a countenance of the sweetest

innocence, when suddenly he exclaimed: "John Jerome,"—so he has been taught to address me,— "John Jerome, what's a ghost like?"

"There are no such things as ghosts," said Katharina promptly.

"But if there were ghosts," persisted the child, "what would they be like?"

If you cannot explain a thing to a small boy, it is then, as I have found, best to answer him with a sentence that he cannot possibly make anything of; and he will ponder over it and cease to pose you.

"I cannot explain that," I answered; "you are talking nonsense. You might just as well ask How tall is a nonentity? Where is Newgate now it has been pulled down? or Who is the Old Bailey?"

"Who is he?" asked the incorrigible infant.

"There's no such person."

"Oh — "

Here we were called by the tinker's daughter to come to the tent to tea. I could not help pitying Anna when I saw her surrounded by these her husband's chosen associates. The presence of her grandmother seemed to show her afresh how incongruous were the elements brought together. The choir-master's wife was

there too. She had brought a cream cheese and Anna had purchased it of her ; and when we came up she was relating some recent experiences. She had paid a visit to London, going by an excursion train ; and she was eloquent on the wonders of the shops and omnibuses, and the crowds of people. "And they took us to see the pictures where those fountains are. I did like that."

Godfrey beamed upon her. It was the first time that art, real art, had been brought before her notice, and her unsophisticated mind perceived its beauty at once. *She did like that.*

"Which pictures pleased you most ?" he asked.

"Well, there was a tailor cutting out a coat, for one. He was as natural as life."

"Yes, you are right ; that is a fine picture."

"But the one I took most particular notice of was what they call a Cardinal, I think. Well, Godfrey, I can only say the button-holes in that man's coat,—they seemed worked so as you could see every stitch, and his cunning little eyes followed us round the place ; but the silk of his tippet was that beautifully done that you could even see the quality. It was the corded sort, worth about eight and sixpence a yard. 'I'll

never say another word again pictures so long as I live,' says a man that stood by ; and then several others said the same. Andrea was the name of the gentleman in the picture."

I think Godfrey would have been very glad if his wife's grandmother had not heard those last critical remarks ; but if a man should "have the courage of his opinions," he certainly should "have the courage of his actions." Godfrey had asked me whether I did not think he ought to make these honest people welcome to his society ; and I said, "Certainly !" and so long as his wife was to live on an open moor, the more honest tinkers and gardeners with their honest wives she had about her, the better. There was, however, a sparkle in the grandmother's eye that annoyed him, and Katharina openly smiled.

I was too much occupied to notice much of what went on, for the mist I had foreseen was coming up faster than was pleasant, and my Malay did not appear with the cob to take the grandmother home. There was nothing for it but to sit quietly. Rather a marked silence had followed. Anna looked at me uneasily. We were on an elevated spot ; but a barley-field, seen some way off, showed its sheaves standing with ghostlike indistinctness. Of course whatever

happened she could not offer her grandmother a bed. Go home in the open carriage she must. The tinker and his daughter withdrew ; so did the choir-master's wife ; and we sat and made conversation as well as we could, till suddenly little George, who is in general as silent as his father, took advantage of a pause and began, "Father, when I go to heaven—"

A startled look came over Godfrey's face, as if he would greatly have grudged his firstborn to that better country ; but when the child paused, he said, "Well, my boy ?"

"When I am in heaven, and the Queen is in heaven too, will *the tradespeople* say 'Your Majesty' to her ?"

"No," answered Godfrey, after pondering for a moment, and then probably giving up the hope of making a fuller answer.

"Are you sure, father ?"

"Yes, I believe I may say that I am quite sure."

"I s'pose then," quoth the other little fellow, "they'll only say 'Ma'am.' And what do you think we shall say to the angels ?"

"I have never been told,— I don't know."

"Does anybody know ?"

"I think not."

The cob at last, and very restless and unwilling to stand. Such a drive home as we had may I never encounter again,—in a thick mist, over an open country, with a timid old lady beside me, and a restless horse inclined to shy at the sheaves and at everything else that in the mist took an unwonted aspect. My Malay boy was to walk home. Katharina sat behind. We lost our way three times. The grandmother caught a very severe cold, and was ill for more than a week. In the mean time the weather broke up,—first a tempest, then a downfall of rain, then another tempest with a fog to follow, then some chilly damp days.

Anna had promptly withdrawn with her boys and her maid to the nearest inn, leaving Godfrey to pack, “fold his tents like the Arabs, and silently steal away.” But she made an excuse of this illness to come and see her grandmother every day, and at the same hour my Malay boy also made an excuse to absent himself daily, and I believe he and Anna always met in the road ; which circumstance, together with my having picked up a piece of paper with the words “Agreeable Miss” heading it, as if it was to be a letter, made me surer than ever that he was trying to make himself acceptable to the little

cockney with the flaxen hair. I might have remembered, when I despised that creature for being so small, so altogether petty, that after all she was the size of life.

But I did not expect her to bring matters on very fast, and was surprised to learn one morning that the lad was off,—had dressed himself in his best clothes, taken his other effects with him, and departed, telling our landlady that he was going to be married. He had laid the cloth for breakfast, and when Katharina lifted up the teapot she found a letter behind it addressed to me.

It ran thus:—

“HONORED JOHN JEROME, ESQUIRE,—

“The fate of a man is not that which commute he possibly, when the day appears. I to you declare this that I depart. The cob have I given his corn. Do not weep for me. I go to unite myself with Maria. With her I shall no more lament the absence of your honorable mare. If the mare had you not sold I would not have leave you desolate Profound Salaams.

“G. C. REA.”

I was exceedingly cross, but I could see that Katharina was much amused. She remarked

that Anna, being now left with the two boys, would see how she really liked doing entirely without a servant. "For, as you can easily see, Jack," she observed, "her scheme is chiefly one for dispensing with servants."

"I think you mean, for turning all the inmates of her houses into servants," I replied; "you will all find plenty to do."

"Not half what there is to do in an ordinary house," she answered. "It will all be done by one o'clock because there will be so many to do it. Some will be upstairs; some will be in the kitchen, cooking. We have learned to cook already at those fashionable classes. The house will need the less cleaning because of there being no carpets. Each set of people will have saved out what is best and handsomest of their furniture, books, and other possessions; so that the whole house, including sitting-rooms, will be handsomely furnished, and rugs and mats will be laid down on the floors."

"All right," I exclaimed; "anything to get rid of servants. They are unmitigated nuisances, — ungrateful sometimes, frequently dishonest, and always extravagant."

I was angry just then, and could not help showing it. Where, indeed, was I to get a man

at an hour's notice to attend to my cob and the carriage, wait at table (for my landlady utterly declined to enter the sitting-rooms), and do all the errands,—an invalid's requirements among them?

These latter included medicines, and sometimes wanted fetching by the railway from the nearest town, which was twelve miles off.

Katharina has occasionally a sweet touch of deference in her manner which is very becoming to her. To be sure it generally enables her to get what she wants! I never like to be bullied by a woman.

She put down her egg. She was just then cracking its shell.

“When you said ‘all right,’” she began, “perhaps you did not mean that we were to have the houses and do as we liked.”

I was surprised and remained silent.

“I thought for the moment that you did,” she went on; “but I do not want to be unfair, or to make out that you have promised them if you have not.”

I felt that this was all Another's doing,—this pathetic desire for something to occupy her hands and her thoughts; and yet, though I had never felt more displeased with him, what happir

could she hope for but in his eventual return? and what would become of her if he, finding she had put herself out of the station in which she had been born, was angry and got up a quarrel and a separation from her? Another, as I know well, is as proud as he is mean. I like to think trenchant truths concerning him, though I keep them to myself for her sake.

"What of Another?" I said; "will he be displeased?"

There was a long pause. At last she lifted up her face: "Do you think there is any risk of that?"

"I am afraid there is."

"You seem to have a very mean opinion of him."

There was a poser for me. I could not deny it, and silence was consent.

"I am sure he is not unreasonable," she said at last. "This is manifestly the right thing to be done if I can do it. He will acknowledge that it is. It insures that I shall be with Anna, that grandmamma shall be with us both, and that we shall have plenty to live upon. Yes, I will do what I think right, if I may."

"Very well," I replied; "then when I say 'all right' I mean that you shall have the houses and do as you please in them."

Consent appeared all the sweeter to Katharina because it had not been forthcoming at once ; and then she talked,—and she talked till she almost made me feel that she was to inherit a fortune instead of losing one. The next day Anna came to see us, went upstairs to pay her respects to the invalid, as in duty bound, then descended and talked to us.

Where were the boys ?

Oh, she had telegraphed to London for Martha, and Martha had arrived. The boys were with her.

Martha was a housemaid who had been left in London.

“ What an advantage it will be to get rid of servants altogether,” quoth I fervently.

“ And of the tents,” said Anna.

“ And of the carpets, and the dinner parties, and the leisure.”

“ And of the tents,” repeated Anna.

It is of no use arguing with a woman.

“ I thought you rather liked the tents.”

“ I thought so myself till I discovered this way of getting out of them. As to leisure, we shall have nothing to do after one o’clock, when we are to dine. We shall not have a late dinner. The lords of creation will dine in the middle

the day away from home, as we find they do now. The tea-things for afternoon tea will be set out on a table in the drawing-room ; for each family must have an afternoon once a week to be at home for its special friends, and exclusive use of the room for that day,—grandmother and I can have the same day,—the other inmates sitting in other rooms or being out. Then there will be a grand meal at eight o'clock for all, — cold meat and fruit and tea and coffee. It will not take long to lay the cloth for it,—there will be many to do it,—and all will come up on the lift. We must have great order and punctuality."

" If the scheme is really to be so advantageous, why does it want so much excusing and explaining ? "

" Because it is untried. But when it has answered thoroughly I shall extend it. Then you will admire it ! There will soon be a whole street full of such pairs of houses. The inmates will have been so far sifted that they will be pleased to associate together ; and if outsiders take it into their heads to look down on them it will not signify, for they can have a great deal of society among themselves. They will all be in easy circumstances and be equals in

birth and standing. Of course they will have the best of their goods, books, and musical instruments with them."

"Yes! and we shall have taken ourselves with us," said Katharina; "we shall not succumb to circumstances and become quite other selves."

"That is the best thing I have heard yet; but it remains to be proved whether you can ride rough-shod over circumstances, and keep the same tone of manners and the same degree of culture that you have now."

"You would not doubt it if you could enter into the scheme more heartily, and if you knew more of it."

"Can it be that I know *less* of it than you do? However, I agree that we often make mistakes for want of fuller knowledge. I was walking in the Bishop's garden yesterday, beyond the town, and if I told you that I met there a vertebrate animal of a genus which can talk, you would not know whether it was the Bishop or whether it was his tame jackdaw that I met, even if I should add that the vertebrate accosted me with 'How are you, mate?'"

"It was the jackdaw."

"You cannot prove that, for want of more knowledge."

XII.

CERTAIN philosophers contend that man is a mere machine ; but there is one capital difference between a man and a machine,—I do not say there is only one,—that you cannot bribe a machine. Now I bribed a girl with a shilling yesterday to get a letter into the post in time. She said she could run down in eight minutes, and she did. Our clock takes eight days to run down. To be sure she has never been bribed to be quicker ; but it is open to any man to try her with a bribe if he likes. As to running to the post, I know she would not do it to oblige a prime-minister. We may therefore fairly turn the contention the other way, and declare that a machine is not a mere man.

These remarks are owing to some made by Katharina when I said the scheme was slippery, and changed at every point where I took hold of it. She answered : “ When we have finished it and set it going will be time enough to expect completeness and regularity of it as if it went by machinery.”

A man can sometimes hold his own with one woman, but never with two.

"It will provide a mission for Katharina," Anna reminded me. "It will be a career for her; think of that!"

I did not believe that Katharina really wanted a career, any more than my dog Tobias wants a wig, or than my dun cow wants a pair of pattens,—two pairs, I mean; but when I said so they veered round again to remind me what a blessing their precious scheme would be to the community of inmates. These were to be all comfortable, instead of always straitened and always anxious, living in pokey little places, and not knowing how to make both ends meet.

But some people, I am convinced, would rather have pokey little places to themselves than dwell with others in larger ones. There is a great deal of pity wasted in this world.

I once fell asleep and dreamed that I was a frog.

Immediately, and quite naturally, I began to croak, and thought I need not have pitied frogs for not having the gift of speech just as good as talk.
croak, my first, has ever
"Croak!" And

uttered the sweetness of life, and the meaning of the world.

I related my dream to them with the pathos that such a subject deserved ; and they laughed.

They informed me that they should continue to exercise pity,—also to make the scheme answer well if possible. They had written to four more sets of people to join,—people whom they knew personally, people gently born but dragged down by circumstances.

So wearisome, as Anna explained, had been their struggle with life, that even Hope had got quite out of heart.

“Then you should have gilded her anchor for her,” I rejoined, “which would have pleased the old thing. Do I hear you say that you have done so already? *You never said anything so ridiculous!* Then you might have done so ; you need not be ashamed of your good deeds. You gilded her anchor for her and immediately she ‘told you a flattering tale’ which you repeated to all the future partners of your scheme.”

Flattery, in my opinion, has been too much abused. It is often merely the expression of one’s good wishes. What can be more appropriate, for instance, than the flattery of the doctor who, hanging out a lamp as a guide to his

patients in the dark, always makes it *couleur de rose*.

"So now," I continued, "you have got all the people excepting the only two of any consequence, Godfrey and your grandmother." Thus I continued gently to oppose them, for I was now fully determined that the scheme should be tried ; and what so likely to forward it as a little judicious opposition ?

Why had I turned round,—do I hear the reader ask ?

Well, partly because of that tinker. I had seen the tinker and his spouse the previous evening, for this good lady had now joined her husband.

They were seated together on a bank of heather, and they were both crying because, forsooth, her wedding ring had dropped off her finger and they could not find it.

I cast my eyes about, and almost directly I saw it lying on the ground. I pointed it out and the tinker ran at it, but he had great difficulty in poising himself so as to pick it up. However, he managed this at last. She put it on, got up, and as the planet Saturn rolls on within his ring, so did she roll on within hers. She was slightly drunk, and he was slightly

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Immediately, and quite naturally, I began to croak, and thought I need not have pitied frogs for not having the gift of speech. Croaking is just as good as talk, and much easier. One croak, my first, has expressed all that and more. "Croak!" And in this, my second, I have

XII.

CERTAIN philosophers contend that man is a mere machine ; but there is one capital difference between a man and a machine,—I do not say there is only one,—that you cannot bribe a machine. Now I bribed a girl with a shilling yesterday to get a letter into the post in time. She said she could run down in eight minutes, and she did. Our clock takes eight days to run down. To be sure she has never been bribed to be quicker ; but it is open to any man to try her with a bribe if he likes. As to running to the post, I know she would not do it to oblige a prime-minister. We may therefore fairly turn the contention the other way, and declare that a machine is not a mere man.

These remarks are owing to some made by Katharina when I said the scheme was slippery, and changed at every point where I took hold of it. She answered : "When we have finished it and set it going will be time enough to expect completeness and regularity of it as if it went by machinery."

A man can sometimes hold his own with one woman, but never with two.

"It will provide a mission for Katharina," Anna reminded me. "It will be a career for her; think of that!"

I did not believe that Katharina really wanted a career, any more than my dog Tobias wants a wig, or than my dun cow wants a pair of pattens,—two pairs, I mean; but when I said so they veered round again to remind me what a blessing their precious scheme would be to the community of inmates. These were to be all comfortable, instead of always straitened and always anxious, living in pokey little places, and not knowing how to make both ends meet.

But some people, I am convin'ced, would rather have pokey little places to themselves than dwell with others in larger ones. There is a great deal of pity wasted in this world.

I once fell asleep and dreamed that I was a frog.

Immediately, and quite naturally, I began to croak, and thought I need not have pitied frogs for not having the gift of speech. Croaking is just as good as talk, and much easier. One croak, my first, has expressed all that and more. "Croak!" And in this, my second, I have

ladies that everything they did would appear to be a becoming occupation for a lady. They had excellent sense, a good deal of vigour, and that natural joyousness which is a very uncommon endowment after early youth.

Then there was a bachelor — a clerk in a government office — with his sister, a widow. She, together with the sisters before mentioned, was very much given to good works ; but it was fully understood that they were to do their share in keeping the house going, before they presumed to attempt anything outside.

Thus there were to be only seven sets of people in my two houses, and all the rooms would be filled.

I was entreated in this letter to go up to London and *look* at the houses. They hoped I would do this, for I was always so kind, and Godfrey had been told of the great scheme and would meet me there ; and then, as I was so good to them and always liked them to be happy, would I — oh, would I — undertake to tell their grandmother and make her like it ? for they wanted to be together, and Katharina loved the two little boys, and Anna was so tired of the tents and of never seeing her own people. Yes, — if I told the grandmother at all, of course it

behooved me to make her like the scheme ; so I did my best, and after her first surprise she listened and cogitated, questioning me with her natural shrewdness, and smiling over the more unpractical parts of the scheme with a certain air of grim delight, which is not very grim after all. She nodded at last : "That 'll do, Jack."

" You understand it ? "

" I understand the gist of it well enough, which is that Godfrey is responsible."

" Then you will join ? "

" Certainly I will join. Anna will find out almost at once what parts of her scheme will not work, and she must make Godfrey change them for her."

" Make him ? "

" Of course ! Anna has had no power hitherto, she has simply followed his ridiculous lead ; but let her once get Godfrey into a scrape, let him find himself entangled in the meshes of such a complicated plan, and he will be thankful to make use of her wits and to depend on her invention for getting him out of it or, as I hope, for leading him smoothly on in it. She is a clever little baggage ; and those two, if they can only be together, will be as happy as queens in spite of Godfrey and Another. At least they will

if, through Godfrey's over-sensitive conscience, Anna can get the upper hand."

"They will not be together long when Another comes home," I remarked.

"If I never have speech of *him* but once so long as I live, he shall that once hear a piece of my mind," said my aunt.

"No, you would not wish a life-long division from your other granddaughter; and what future has she to look forward to but his gracious return and kind consent to a marriage with her?"

"She is a very foolish girl."

"She is not a very happy one just now; but as to this scheme, your judgment, you know, will be a great thing,—you will help them with your advice."

She fell into my little trap at once, and added: "But though I join them entirely because Godfrey is in it, yet he is the one supernumerary. It cannot truly be while he remains, and if it threatens to go independently of him he will have to go out."

"But is it likely to answer independent of him?"

"Very likely if it is a good thou

but there is nothing respectable and fitting in his turning himself into a servant out of singularity or caprice ; and if you say ‘out of philanthropy’ you make the thing into a charity at once. Anna’s chance of what I may call reforming him lies not in his making himself into a voluntary drudge, but in his working with her to extend such a scheme as this. He must go into it from above, not from below.”

“ But he has been tricked into it,” I observed, “ by the promise that he shall descend.”

“ Let him descend then,” said my aunt, “ till he is thoroughly tired of it, when, like a good wife, she can haul him up again.”

Well,—enough of this conversation. I did go up to London, and on a fine September afternoon I let myself into the lower of my two houses with a key, and found Godfrey there before me.

Shall I ever forget the candid air of open good will with which he sat on the kitchen dresser and looked blandly at the stove?

“ O yes,—certainly, if I would let him have either of the two houses he should be glad to let them and do anything that his dear Anna deems necessary.”

He wished to have all the floors stained, and to have carpets.

Godfrey's face glowed. It would please him much, he said, that his boys should be brought up to do without such luxury. As to his dear Anna, he felt that she was coming on; he was proud of her.

Deluded mortal.

I explained to him that he must have coal bunks made at the top of each house, and that the water must be laid on, and then that he must make a lift. He thought it would have been easy for him to have carried up the coal that would be wanted. I said no, for it might be required sometimes when he was out doing necessary errands. He was impressed with the reasonableness of this remark, and when we parted he walked down the street with a rapt air of sweet elation. All seemed to be going well with him.

When I got to my hotel I found a letter awaiting me, a joint production containing the combined wisdom of Anna and Katharina. It ran thus. Anna began.

“DEAR JACK,—What about the pots and kettles? Mrs. John Blank has been making us aware that we are not strong enough to lift them; so what is to be done? I promised

Godfrey that we would not have servants ; but she says we must have one strong woman—a charwoman—to come in every morning and light the kitchen fire, put the sauce-pans on for the early dinner, and then get the hot joints out into the dishes and set these in the lift. She must dine herself, and then she might go. Will you break this to Godfrey ? Mrs. John Blank says it will only come to about twopence each day for each family to pay in wages. Half a servant among seven does not seem much ; but Godfrey will think we are putting in the thin edge of the wedge.

“ Your ever grateful
“ ANNA.”

This is Anna's usual signature. Under it followed Katharina's epistle :—

“ DEAR JACK,— When Anna told Godfrey of her scheme he appeared at first hardly to understand it ; but as she unfolded it and he saw how many it would make comfortable, and also how much that was menial would fall to his own share, he could not speak for pleasure, and tears rolled down his cheeks.

“ When Anna saw this she was so touched and so shocked to think why she was inve-

gling him into it that she burst into tears too, and darted a displeased look at me as if it was my fault. It was a little awkward for me. I thought she was going to confess all; but she did n't.

"They sat together and loved one another a good deal, and he said it was the happiest day of his life, and she said she wished she was more worthy of him.

"What a goose he is, Jack; but oh, how good!

"Your affectionate
"KATHARINA."

Well, we put workmen into the houses, who soon began to knock them about. Some of the future inmates sent in furniture. Godfrey superintended and I went home.

It was evening. I bought a *Globe* newspaper; but there were people whom I knew in the railway carriage, and we talked all the way down, — my paper, folded together, lying on the seat. When I got out at our little country station, I forgot it and left it there. A great deal of misery and expense, and a projected journey thousands of miles long, would have been due to a certain person but for that momentary lapse of memory.

I crossed the bridge over the line, and arranged to have my effects sent on,—a fish-basket was among them,—for my Malay boy having levanted, and his place not having been supplied, there was no one to meet me.

I may have spent five minutes in the station when, coming out, I found that the train I had travelled down in had been shunted on to the other rails and was waiting just beyond the platform. My friends saw me and waved something *pink* at me. It was the *Globe* newspaper.

They flung it forth. It opened in the descent, fell full face on a heap of wet mud, and got so dirty that I left it there and went home without it.

When I reached home I perceived that the house was empty. The servants were attentive, the rooms were fresh and well lighted. I could not detect any change, but something that had all the worst effects of a change, something accustomed which had become unbearable, assured me that the place was empty.

I knew what it meant; it had driven me from my own country twice before. Still, as I said to myself that night, "many fellows travel and stay away for years, entirely for their own pleasure."

I was very bad company to Myself that evening. There was nothing bitter and contemptuous that I did not say to Myself, and I got from Myself as good as I gave.

I went to bed, and saw the dark out and the new day in, and saw the sun come up, and felt more miserable than ever.

At last I fell asleep. I had slept, I know not how long, when I seemed to hear, athwart a deep chasm into which I was peering, a sort of gentle — I may say apologetic — knocking. I took no notice, but soon saw that the knocking was caused by a gnome, a small and very shabby one, who was tapping feebly at the side of the chasm.

The tapping went on at short intervals for about a quarter of an hour, when I observed that I was awake. There was silence, followed by a sort of female hue and cry, — two or three people were running upstairs, and they fell on my door with such an ecstasy of banging and shaking and thumping that I could not have made myself heard in answer, however loudly I had shouted. So I was quiet till they ceased and listened. I then said, “Is anything the matter?”

“O. sir,” cried my housekeeper, “we thought you were dead!”

"Is anything else the matter?" I shouted.

"Nothing so very particular, sir," she replied.

I began to get up. I found it was eleven o'clock. I am a sound sleeper. There was no man-servant to come into my room and rouse me as usual; hence these ineffectual tappings,—and hence a good deal besides.

While I was at breakfast my housekeeper came in to apologize for the noise she and her subordinates had made, and to tell me that my aunt's man on his way to the station had left a note. My dog, in fact, was at that moment touzling the note, and under his auspices it was already open on the rug; for I had looked on it as merely a piece of waste paper.

In a shaking hand it demanded my presence. No doubt I knew what the writer feared, and would I come and advise with her as soon as I possibly could?

XIII.

I SET forth hastily with Tobias. Now whether or not Tobias is a literary dog, and takes to the reviewing line in the dog's form of it, I cannot say ; but the fact is certain that printed paper has an extraordinary fascination for him, and he no sooner sees a leaf of it than he tries to tear it to pieces, just as a reviewer might. Then he brings it me, who am his world and his public, and lays it at my feet.

I am afraid he is a beast. However, he does but act according to his lights or his darks, whichever you like to call them. Tobias saw the rejected "Globe" and brought it to me. Well, I did not throw the paper away, or he would have rushed after it again and brought it back. It had been dried in the wind. I folded and put it in my pocket.

My heart seemed to be lying in the dust for my own feet to tread on it ; and what an indifferent and cruelly peaceful world I was walking in. However,—enough of that. I heard a sweet voice singing as I came up to the open

window. Katharina,—yes, there she sat, her head bent low over some writing materials. Like a moth I made for the candle.

“ You did not send for me ? ”

“ No, grandmother did. I had better ring and let her know that you are here.”

“ Is anything the matter ? ”

“ Oh no, Jack,—not that I know of.”

“ Then you have seen her this morning ? ”

“ Seen her ? Of course,—several times ; but Jack, you know the *stud* belongs to me ; grandmother does not object, so I am going to sell the stud.”

The stud consisted of one rather elderly cob.

She looked more like Mary Queen of Scots than ever : a Mary smiling, innocent,—speaking in modern English and dressed in a garb of a golden brown color, made of some soft material which gave her a delightfully domestic air.

I looked at her. Another might be expected any day. Perhaps he would see her in that very gown, that very day.

“ Jack, what makes you look so dull this morning ? ”

“ Nothing that I can tell to you. What about selling the stud ? It would amuse me to hear of it.”

“I have made some advertisements. Tommy, as you know, is rather old, and he goes very well unless he takes it into his head to cogitate; then he stops, and will not stir unless I stand up in the carriage and hit him with the butt end of the whip. Still, he has always been our stud. Grandmother cannot drive now, so I shall sell the whole. But how to say what is true, and yet get any one to buy him! What do you think of such an advertisement as this? ‘To be sold without reserve: the Hertfordshire highflyer, beautiful horse; four legs, a fine gray tail, a pleasant eye’—”

Thus far Katharina.

“If you please, sir, mistress would like to see you upstairs.”

Upstairs I went, and there my aunt sat.

“O Jack, O my good, kind nephew!—oh! what is to be done? You’ve seen it?”

“Seen it? No. Seen what?”

“He’s married.”

“Married! Who is married?”

“Another.”

I had seen Katharina below, joyous, contented, calm.

I looked earnestly at the grandmother, and with anxious pity sat down by her and took her

hand. In one instant she divined my thought, snatched her hand away with a vigor and a bitterness indescribable. "So you think my wits are to blame, and not my circumstances? It was all in the papers last night, the evening papers."

I pulled the sheet of the *Globe* from my pocket.

"If any other man ever had such a name as his," she continued, "there is a chance for Katharina. If not, there is none."

Well,—there, looking me in the face, was the name of Another,—his baptismal name, a very singular one, and his surname equally singular.

If this record were not true, I could tell the names at once to the reader. As it is, I must invent two, as strange and not at all like them, to call him by. If any one finds him out, even through this disguise, it will serve him right.

This was the paragraph:—

"Accident to Mrs. Tudor Smutt. A carriage accident, which was very near having disastrous consequences, took place at the Tive and Hemyock Junction yesterday. Mr. T Smutt, of a family well known in this neighbourhood, had just left the station, and with his and his three step-daughters had entere

open carriage, when the train starting off frightened the horses, and they ran away at a frightful rate,— finally overthrowing the carriage at the foot of the hill, and actually tossing Mrs. Tudor Smutt on to the top of a newly cut hawthorn hedge. Mr. Smutt was not hurt, and his daughters were rescued from the overturned phaeton without injury beyond a few bruises ; but Mrs. Smutt's arm was badly sprained, and her face was much cut and torn by the thorns. She was taken back to Tiverton with her family, and they are now staying at the Castle Hotel," etc.

I was amazed and sat silent, revolving the matter in my mind. I had supposed that Another was still in the East.

"Do you think there is a mistake in the Christian name?" said my aunt. "Another has two brothers." Then she paused, till I told her that one of these brothers was but lately married to a young girl, and the second, to my certain knowledge, was with his regiment at Bermuda,— having lately returned from his leave.

Then she said : "And I have telegraphed to the Castle Hotel. I had difficulty in hiding what I was about from Katharina, and I have got no answer."

She had requested to know whether Mr. Tudor Smutt was still at the Castle Hotel, Tiverton, and desired that if he was he would immediately communicate with her. While I sat with her came an answer to her telegram. Mr. Tudor Smutt was in the hotel, but was about to start for the North. That was all; and the answer came from the proprietor of the hotel, not from Another.

I did not tell Katharina's grandmother that she had herself destroyed her chance of finding out what she wanted to know, but I thought so. If he had come home he had intended for some reason or other that Katharina should not know it. If he had married he had not courage to tell her so, and but for this accident her family might not have known it for months. If he had got himself into a scrape, he was just the kind of man to trust to circumstances for working him out of it.

"Katharina will break her heart," sobbed the good old grandmother; "and it's such a slight to us all; and she has waited so long and been so patient. And I *always disliked him to that degree*; and it was such a cruel disadvantage, her being bound to him for so long, that, as I did make up my mind to it and she depends on

him, it is doubly hard that he should throw us over."

To make a long story short, as I sat still talking I turned with a sudden start; not that any sound had called my eyes in that direction, only that I was conscious of a presence in the room,—some one not moving, only being.

Within the door, standing silent as a vision, her eyes a little widened by wonder, her cheek a little paled by suspense, and her two hands put forward as if (sweet thing!) to ward off some evil news,—she knew not what,—stood Katharina.

"There is something for me to hear," she said without moving, and in a tone so low and dim that I caught her words with difficulty.

Neither of us spoke.

"If he is dead," she began, and her eyes with their far-away look rested on mine,—"if he is dead, no one can say I was not kind."

She spoke with the tone and air of one talking in sleep,—in a low, passionless, expressionless fashion. It was almost a whisper, and still she seemed to be holding off the answer with her hands.

"He is not dead, my dear and precious child," murmured her grandmother; and then she slowly bent forward and tears rained upon her hands.

"Is he ill?"

"No." We both spoke then.

"What is it all, then? What is the matter?"

"Nobody knows whether anything is the matter or not."

"That was Jack's voice?"

"Yes, my dear, Jack is here. Don't you see him? You must not be frightened, Katharina."

Presently we got her to sit down and drink some water, and very soon we had told her all we knew.

Her comment on it was unexpected: "Somebody must have stolen his name."

She and her grandmother were both sobbing now with all their hearts; but presently recovering herself my venerable relative burst forth into such a tirade against Another, showered upon him such a hailstorm of contemptuous words, and peppered him with such epithets of scorn, that I lifted myself bolt upright to gaze at her as I sat between the two,—and found myself, as is often the case on momentous occasions, drawn away from the main question to consider the accidental ornaments and fringes of circumstance in which it was dressed.

What a fine indignation there was in that aged face, what a flash in the usually cold blue

eyes, what a flush of pure red over the clear-cut features !

When she saw my attentive surprise she soon collapsed again, and Katharina spoke on the other side with a calm almost equally unexpected.

" You have always been my good, good friend." She laid her hand on my arm. " You have seen the state of the case, but you have always perceived what was my duty, and helped me to do it and to be loyal."

" The state of the case !" I exclaimed. I hated myself when I had said it ; but the words had been uttered, and they rang in my own ears as they manifestly stung hers. Her eyelids drooped as if they were weighed down by a beautiful shame, and her face was all colored with one blush of pure carnation. I felt that her confession had been made inadvertently. She had ceased to love him, but she meant to be faithful to her engagement.

I looked at her as she sat for two or three moments, still, as if in a dream. I felt keenly how dear she was, how dear she always had been to me ; but I knew she was far from suspecting this.

" We have been friends so long," I began, " that if you have said anything you did not

mean to say, surely you will depend on me forever to consider the words unsaid."

No answer. She manifestly could not recover herself.

"I shall wish just as much as ever to help you, in spite of this report in the paper; and there is still a possibility of explanation. What would you like me to do?"

"I don't know."

I had not believed her capable of being so much out of countenance; but, as if the sound of her words roused her by their whispered unlikeness to her usual voice, she manifestly struggled with her shy astonished trouble,—and presently she breathed more freely, the blush faded, and she said almost in her usual tone, "I should like that you and grandmother would consult as to what is best to be done."

"I shall not believe that he has done this thing," she presently added, "unless some one, whom I can trust, actually sees him with this lady, and he, himself, acknowledges that he has married her."

No other possibility than that Another had married "this lady" ever entered her mind for a moment.

A few years ago when railroads were not, if

a man with a wife and family and a lot of luggage set forth from some given hotel, and another man set forth in chase of him, he was sure sooner or later to be found. By the coach, or by the post-horses he had used, he could be traced from stage to stage. It is different now. People buy tickets at a railway station, and nobody hears their names or knows anything about them.

Now I am not writing this book to chronicle the flight of Another, or my chase after him, though I had a long one.

Sometimes I tried to believe that I wished her first thought was correct, and that "somebody else had stolen his name;" but when I had reached the hotel at Tiverton, and been told that the Tudor Smutts were off with the three young ladies, and when I had been favored with a minute description of Tudor Smutt himself,—I gave up that, was sure that the fugitive was Another, and sure also that he felt he should be chased, and was doing what he could to hide himself.

But why? He had committed no offence that he was likely to get anything worse than scorn and contumely for. I was thinking of this while eating a hasty dinner in the coffee-

room of the hotel, when in walked Godfrey and Anna ; the former in a mild state of incredulity, —he could not believe Another would be so dis-honorable ;— the latter in a high state of indignation, her grandmother had written to her on the previous night.

“ Odious little horror,” exclaimed Anna when the waiter had left us, and she could take to personalities, as ladies always do on such occasions, “ I could tear his little heart out with pleasure, *if he had one !* ”

“ My sweetest Anna,” said Godfrey in his candid leisurely style, “ can this be you ? Be calm ! Let us not be unjust, and say things that afterwards we shall have reason to be sorry for. No one, my dearest wife, is in general so reasonable as you are.”

“ O Godfrey ! ” exclaimed Anna, “ don’t ! I can’t always be straining up to your level. I don’t want to be reasonable.”

Godfrey looked mildly disturbed, and she went on : “ But I hope he has done this thing, — Oh, I do hope that with all my heart ! ”

“ Well,” I exclaimed, when I saw him set his great hands on his large knees and look at her post with alarm, “ this is as fine an autumnal as I ever saw, and we must set off in

fifty minutes, for we have to travel all night; we are going to Liverpool. Waiter, what is there in the hotel?"

I had rung furiously, and in a short time food of various sorts was on the table. Anna and Godfrey were seated before it, and we were all making as good a meal as if such a man as Another had never been born.

A wonderful night followed. Little pricks in the salmon-colored west sparkled and shook, reporting themselves as small adornments loath to be overlooked. The jewelry of heaven, visible in all the worlds that go round this our little sun! Have their possible inhabitants better eyes than we? Can they discriminate this active globe, the earth, and the small green island lying on the sides of the north, and the tiny lines scored upon it which go by the name of railroads, and the flying carriages with their trail of snow-white scud?

I tell you candidly that I do not know whether they can or not, but I do know that the sleep of the just is occasionally accompanied by the snoring of the just; and if it pleases us to think that the inhabitants of Orion, of Rigel or Aldebaran, may possibly see our railway trains, it is only fair to suppose that they can also hear

us snore,—hear Godfrey at least. At the same time I consider that the guard who once looked in at a junction was distinctly mistaken, for he declared that “that gentleman’s snoring was enough to wake the dead, and leave as much noise over as ought to make Niagara Falls ashamed of themselves for having pretended to be anyway obstreperous.”

Anna and I did not argue with that guard. The person that I argued with was Myself. As for her, she slumbered, for she was used to the marital serenade. This was the gist of my argument.

I. So you are secretly glad, you mean hound, that this poor sweet girl, whom you pretend to love, has probably met with a misfortune which is likely to wreck her happiness utterly.

Myself. This really is not like you, Sir. She could not have been happy with Another. He is a prig ; he is precise, domineering, egotistic, cold.

I. But still he is the man of her choice.

Myself. And it appears that he has run away from her ; and your conduct will be almost as bad, Jack, if, this proving to be true, you step up and try to work upon her feelings.

I. She might do worse.

Myself. Perhaps, but that you will never

know, for if you go limping up to her, she will have to take you.

I. She shall never take me against her true wish.

Myself. She must. •

I. That is a lie!

Myself. It is not! Do you propose to do other than confess your life-long love.

I. What chance shall I have if I do not?

Myself. And what chance has she if you do? You saved the lives of both her sisters; you act like a son to her old grandmother.

I. These are old arguments. I yielded to them when she was eighteen. I went away; I almost ate my heart out in absence; and what is she the happier? Now let me alone!

Myself. But you won't do it, Jack; I hope better of you.

I. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks to fly upward." Well, if I am to forego my only chance of happiness —

Myself. [Interrupting]—and of tricking her, while she smarts under this indignity, into a mere marriage of esteem.

I. —my only chance of happiness, as I was saying, I shall have to make myself scarce again. I'll go away. O my Katharina! Yes, I must go; I think I'll go to America.

We were waiting in a station while this argument was proceeding. Day had dawned. Godfrey had awoke, and was shivering a little ; and Anna said to me, Oh, so pathetically, " Dear Jack, I cannot bear it ! "

" Bear what ? "

" To hear you sigh so. Don't ! "

" He is hungry, no doubt," said Godfrey ; " emptiness is enough to make a fellow sigh."

I made no cavil, but let the explanation pass. We had better have come up straight to London, and then proceeded to Liverpool at once, for we had several delays while getting across to the Northwestern Line.

XIV.

WHEN we reached Liverpool we divided, and made research in the different hotels. No need to chronicle our failures.

I had begun to give up hope, and to feel what a ridiculous position we were in, when Godfrey and Anna, thinking they had got a clue, went off to Edinburgh, and I, tired and vexed, returned to my hotel, sat down in the coffee-room, and began to consider what I would do next. A family sat at a table near me. I took no notice of that family. "Dear papa," was appealed to a good deal. I did not notice his answers,—never so much as looked at him. "Dear mamma," a ponderous woman very much bedizened with jewels, wore her arm in a sling. My attention was not arrested even by that. I merely observed that her hair was too black to be of true English product, and her nose a little too aquiline. I was reminded by them all of Jewesses, but not strongly reminded.

Being tired I half dozed, dropped my hat on

the polished floor with a smart report, and, starting up awake, met the eyes of the man. He had been sitting with his back to me and had turned at the noise.

Tudor Smutt !

I was so astonished that I sat dumb ; and he, rising, said to the ladies that he had forgotten to give orders about his letters, and glided out of the room. I doubt whether he was sure that I recognized him. I followed. He quickened his pace, made for a vestibule. My steps were behind him. He hurried to a door that he might escape me. It proved to be merely a cupboard-door. He bolted into the cupboard and shut himself up ; but I opened the door, peeped into the little dark place, and there he stood,—red in the face and deeply ashamed of himself.

“ Tudor Smutt, I believe ? ” quoth I, rather blandly.

“ Ah ! Oh ! Yes indeed ! I believe it is Jerome. Who could have expected to meet you here ? ”

“ I fully expected to meet you here,” was my reply. “ *I have been chasing you up all the way from the Castle Hotel at Tiverton.* Had n’t you better come out ? ”

He came out and sat down ; he was now white to the lips.

"Anything said before that lady (I hope you will be careful, Jerome; I hope you don't mean to be inconsiderate) might wreck,—well, it might wreck my chance of happiness altogether."

"You had better look out, then," I answered aloud, "and tell me all I want to know, or I shall have to apply to that lady."

"What — what — I mean what do you want to know?"

"I want to know whether that lady is your wife."

"Yes, she is."

"Prove it! You had better be quick; they will be coming out directly."

"Prove — prove it? How can I, on the spur of the moment? Is not my word enough?"

"Nonsense, Smutt! Why am I to suppose that your word is any better than your deed?"

"On my sacred honor, Jerome."

"Your sacred honor! I like that! Have done with such rubbish, and answer me."

"You are insulting me! How dare you? What right have you to asperse the character of my wife with your vile doubts?"

"There, don't tremble so! This bluster, ridiculous as it may be under the circumstances,

becomes you better. Have you got your marriage certificate about you? or has she?"

"No. What do you want it for?"

"That I may see when you were married, and where."

"We were married in London, on the third of August, at St. George's, Bloomsbury. I met with her on my return voyage."

"And the clergyman's name, or the clerk's?"

He told me.

"We must telegraph for that certificate at once. You have been base enough, by your own account, to marry one woman without releasing another from a promise that you have held her to for several years; and it is my belief that you meant to go off to America, and save yourself the disgrace of making any explanation at all. Waiter," I continued, as one of that fraternity passed through the vestibule, "please to let Mrs. Smutt know that Mr. Smutt has gone out for a few minutes."

I made him get his hat.

"Why are you in such a hurry?" he exclaimed nervously.

"Because I do not want to be in your company longer than can be helped."

It was a shame I said that, under the circum-

stances,— which were that I was inwardly glad to believe as I did that he really was married, and that I had always disliked him heartily.

A telegraph office was close at hand. I telegraphed in Tudor's presence to the clergyman then officiating at St. George's, Bloomsbury ; for it was Wednesday morning, and I felt sure there would be service going on.

I was right. That very clergyman answered : Service was just over ; what did I want ?

In less than an hour I got what I wanted. He telegraphed the words of an entry which set forth that on the third of August he, A. B., had performed the ceremony of marriage between Tudor Smutt, bachelor, and Lavinia Cohen, widow.

For a "consideration" to the clerk, as he told me, I could have a certified copy of the register by post the next morning.

Tudor took out his purse to pay for the messages.

"No, thank you," quoth I, "but I will accept a little information from you if you will give it. Why did you run away ? Did you really think such people as we are were likely to sue you for breach of promise ?"

"I thought the circumstances might get to

the ears of my wife and displease her ; and of course I desire harmony in my own house."

"Oh, then," said I, "you were not able to get *it* settled on you. Ah ! I see. You have to keep her in good humour."

He darted an angry look at me, and drew himself up. "Do you mean to insinuate that I married her for her money ?" he exclaimed.

"Tudor," quoth I, counting the change and putting it in my pocket, "you are quite safe, man ; we are not going to do anything to you ; and (I speak for myself) I should scorn to annoy an innocent lady because she happens to be your wife. In return for this, the least you can do is to receive my little insinuations with civility. Of course you may deny their truth if you can. I have now got what I want ; pray consider yourself free."

So he departed,—for the first few steps with amazing dignity, and then with a certain urgency and alacrity. About an hour after, I saw him taking a drive. He was packed into an open carriage with his wife and her three daughters. The former was resplendent in flying feathers and dangling chains.

I heard afterwards that he had actually contemplated a trip to America, and had almost

persuaded his wife to take it as part of their wedding tour. This was on account of their name having got into the papers. Luckily for the wife, her accident proved to be, in reality, of no consequence at all; but the dread of exposure had filled his little soul with despair.

I wrote to Katharina, sparing her the details of her late lover's contemptible bearing and poltroonery, but sending her a copy of the marriage certificate, and telling her I hoped she would soon forget Tudor and meet with some man more worthy of her. Then I mentioned that I was about to take a tour abroad, and hoped to be in London some time in the following spring,—time enough, in fact, to see them all in the houses and their great experiment fully answering. I have a conscience, as I hope, and various long arguments with myself had convinced me of my duty. I did not even return home, but sent to my housekeeper for my traps, and shortly stepped on board one of the finest steamers of the finest line bound for New York.

The sea, especially when it is stormy, has a strange fascination,—a strangely exhilarating effect on me. It takes half the sting from trouble, and more than half the disadvantage

from lameness. My sea-legs are almost as good as another man's. But, alas ! on landing I met with an accident. I got a fall, and injured the lame foot again.

I was carried to an hotel ; and without wanting in the least to excite pity, for nothing is further from my thought than the least pity for myself, I must admit that for about six weeks I had an evil and painful time of it. I spent it chiefly lying on a bed or a couch,—receiving such kindly visitors as chose to come and see me, and writing the later chapters of this book.

I saw nothing whatever of the American continent excepting the sky, which is not at all like our sky,—the snow, which has not the least the effect of our snow,—and one street, which was not like our streets.

In case you should desire to argue with me, I will tell you the why and the wherefore of these things ; and then I shall not feel obliged to care, whatever you may say.

First I must observe that the human eyes are impressed by the effects more than by the facts of nature, are beguiled by colour to forget form, and deceived by light as much as by darkness.

The sky was vastly more blue and high to my eyes, for we were much farther south. Also the

dark was a much deeper and purer darkness. But the snow was not so white. No, I say it was not! Because the light from that sky got down into it, searched it out, and, so to speak, burrowed into it. So that, where it had not been trodden, it might have been better compared to delicately drifted swan's-down than to opaque "icing" on the top of a wedding cake, which is the effect of English snow. In the same latitudes of Europe I have not seen like effects.

As to that street, the difference between it and our streets, if not organic, was convincing.

It had not that solid, stolid, majestic air of dirt, that ancient, strong, old-fashioned, last-for-ever, don't-care-for-you sort of aspect, that one meets with in parts of our old towns.

No, it was painted up, which gave it the look of being not substantial enough. It was impudent and gimcracky. And whereas our folks in their streets stump about in cold weather looking as solid as milestones, these had the air of draped laths.

But they were most kind and friendly laths. Some of them had come back from Europe in the same ship with me; and they came evening after evening, ladies as well as men, and sat with me or played at chess and at whist. I made

several friends whom I hope to keep and behave better to in the future than in the past ; for I am sensible of having been snappish to them when I was in pain, and they did not resent it.

Some of these friends, Mr. and Mrs. Ezra P. Smyth and Mr. and Mrs. James Z. Pelliver, helped to write this book at my dictation ; in fact I dictated it all to them, as far as the commencement of my voyages ; but the best of it was that they thought it was all pure fiction. They had no notion that it chronicled anything but my invention, and would come in evening after evening to beguile me into going on with it because they thought it amused me. But to proceed. I had a kind and skilful doctor, a very good fellow, an Englishman ; and he also had come over with me, and was studying some branch of chemistry. He called in a New Yorker too, and they both agreed.

About the middle of January I was pronounced quite well enough to travel, and they recommended me to go as far south as I could.

I had noticed for some time that my friends the Pellivers were very fond of leading the conversation to an uncle of theirs, a wonderful man, a celebrated bone-setter,—a quack, in short, and neither more nor less.

The third time this subject came up, it was brought a long way round before it reached home. I observed the process with amusement.

It professed to take its rise with certain devout remarks on the rarer gifts bestowed by the Creator on particular highly favoured mortals. Now, there was St. Francis of Assisi ! There could be no doubt that he really had the power to tame and attract many kinds of wild animals, just as Rarey in modern days, indeed in these days, could tame the most vicious horse in a few minutes. Then as to another rare gift, that of almost instantaneous calculation,—calculation so swift that those who possessed the power could not follow their own paths and explain the process ; like the lightning they started and were instantly at the goal. They need only mention Babbage, for instance, and the Calculating Boy. I rather thought that Babbage and the Calculating Boy were one and the same person ; but I said nothing, and they proceeded. It was impossible, they said, to deny the existence of such gifts, and it would be a great foible to demand an investigation as to their nature before availing one's self of them ; just as much as it would be to decline the services of those rare mortals who almost from childhood could tell

by the merest touch, and sometimes by a look, when a bone was out of its place, having at the same time a heaven-taught knack of putting it in again. There was a celebrated man in London who had such a gift. Their uncle had been over to Europe and had visited and compared notes (so far as a man could who knew no language but his own) with the most gifted of that fraternity, and thought this London man the greatest of them all. Had I ever heard of him? Yes; I had. As I was going South I should pass their uncle's location. He was a quack doctor, it was true. Might he look at me? I said that to please them I would have let him *look at me* if I had had anything for him to exercise his craft upon.

"This man frequently found out that people had little bones *out* when they did not know it."

"But I had been attended by some of the first English surgeons, and, as they knew, by one in New York."

They were not satisfied.

"And besides, if these were wrong it must be too late to do anything now."

They were not convinced.

Well, would I at least think it over?

I promised that I would.

"And as to going to see their old uncle,—he did not pretend to be a general practitioner; would I go and see him on my return?"

I replied by warm thanks for their friendship and their great wish to serve me; and then I shirked the subject. We parted, and I went South, where I enjoyed my usual health and limped about exactly as usual; but—cutting that three months or so out of my life, for my travels are not worth recording—I go on to about the last day of March, when, on a beautiful morning, descending from a railway car, I saw written up the very name of the place where this kindly old uncle lived. It was a junction, and I shall always be thankful for a disappointment that befell me there. A friend, who was to have met me, let me know that he could not come for two or three days; and there I was left stranded.

But—

"There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

A wagon drove into the station, with a somewhat countrified looking old fellow in it who demanded some parcels, mentioning the bone-setter's name. I stepped forward and mentioned mine. He was the very man. He had heard of me from his niece and nephew. He was cordial,

and insisted. I could, I must, I should,—he was sure I would,—come and see him and his two daughters.

Come I did. "It was strange," I remarked, "that you should have driven into the station just as I was there."

"Many strange things happen to such as wait on the ways of Providence," said he with his Yankee tone and a certain devoutness of manner. "I s'pose you air aware that you came to me by that appintment."

I answered by informing him that his art could not help me. I had no bone out.

He smiled. "Wa'll, you have," he answered.

"How do you know?" I exclaimed.

He was silent for at least five minutes, while we jolted over a road so vile that any man but an American would thankfully have walked on it rather than driven. Then he said, "It will hurt you to the pint of making you holler, but we 'll talk of that byme by."

I had not the least intention of anything more than talk.

Then we drew near to a pretty house with many trees about it, and three pretty girls in the porch.

Two of them were extremely tall. Those, he

said, were his daughters ; they had both suffered from delicate lungs, and for their sake he had come to the South. "The young lady in the flowered pinafore," he continued, "is a friend." He was a very large tall man himself, almost gigantic.

So I was introduced to his two daughters and to the young lady in the flowered pinafore. It was, in point of fact, a sort of apron with a bib. I had often seen Katharina wear such an one when she was painting. It was made of a kind of cream-coloured stuff which, I think, is called tick, and it was worked all about with oranges, lemons, and leaves.

I made myself as agreeable as I possibly could to those girls. We had a very pleasant afternoon. I drove them over to a merry-making at another farmhouse, and we did not return till late. When the girls had retired, the father began again to talk, and that in a fashion almost paternal. In short, he examined the lame foot.

"You air very onbelieving," he remarked.

"There is nothing in reason that I would not give to walk as other men do," I replied, at the same time letting him know that I knew a cure was not possible.

"Well, we ken talk about the fee afterwards,"

said he, purposely misunderstanding me. "So you've consulted several of the *faculty*, here and there. It's not often I've had a chance of gitting a rise out of a Britisher."

This audacious confidence astonished me, and he sent me off to bed admonishing me to sleep well. He laughed and chuckled all the way upstairs as he conducted me to my room, as if something gave him keen delight, and then he left me.

It was about ten o'clock the next day, I think, that he said: "Wa'll, Jacob — Jacob's my man — is here; and you've slept over it. What do you say?"

I looked into the confident eyes of the gigantic old fellow, and almost to my own astonishment replied: "I say yes, and God speed you." Two minutes before I had not intended to give him any such answer.

Wa'll, as he would have said, it behooves me to made this chronicle very brief, and yet I can tell all.

There was a couch in his room. Jacob asked me to sit on it, — to look out of the window, and let him hold my arms.

In two minutes, the old man's soft hands being on my foot, I felt a most outrageous and

astonishing wrench in it. I shouted, "hollered," as he would have said.

The chronicle is over.

The next thing I noticed was that several bees were buzzing in my ears, and I vainly endeavoured to lift my hands and dash them away; and then I noticed that this buzzing of bees had resolved itself into the sound of voices, the voices of girls.

"He looks very strong. Why did he faint?" quoth the voice of her with the flowered pinafore.

"They 'most always do," said Jacob.

A nice little hand was busy with my necktie.

"Here is some coffee, Mr. Jerome," said another of the girls. So I sat up and drank it; and at the same time feeling sorry for my host, — who stood apart looking at me, as I supposed, with deep gravity and discomfiture, — I said, "This is a bad beginning, is it not, Doctor?"

"Ahem!" was all his answer.

"Now you girls ken go, *ef you feel like it*," he presently added.

He sat looking at me for at least five minutes, and said nothing. Then he proceeded, "You may put your foot to the ground, *ef you feel like it*."

I did so.

"Wa'll, what do you say 'bout it?" he next inquired.

"It feels very odd—very strange. It seems to me to go flat on the ground like the other foot."

He took out his watch, and sat staring at it and at me for perhaps three minutes more; then he said, "Wa'll, sir! now you ken stand up—and—now you ken walk to the window, *ef you feel like it.*"

I did get up. I walked to the window, just as other men walk,—but gently and almost reverentially, the joy was so subduing. I walked, and I never limped more.

Oh how sweet were those words of quiet authoritative permission. They often appear to sound in my ears even to this day; and how sweet were the first steps across that floor,—even so sweet, I thought (if it could be so), as their steps who walk in the Golden Street of the New Jerusalem.

He desired that I would stay there a week to be under his charge, and that he might be sure I was all right.

Of course I did so.

"And 'bout that fee," he one day began.

I begged him to name anything he pleased.

“ You will give it ? ”

“ Thankfully ! ”

“ That doctor of yourn in New York ? He was a Britisher ? ”

“ Yes, but he does not practise in New York ; and he is gone home again.”

“ My folks wrote to me 'bout you, and I wrote to him.”

“ Nobody told me that.”

“ No. I gave my view of what might be wrong, and said he could send his patient to me ; and he told them that I was a quack and was quite mistaken, and he never even answered me.”

“ Indeed ! ”

“ Wa'll — I de-mand of you that you search out that man, ef he is in his own location, and let him see this foot of yourn, which I calc'late 'll make him feel small. And you ken tell him that I said it was a very simple case.” Here he chuckled, and seemed to think he had no more to say.

“ I will. But that is not all? Surely you will accept a real fee.”

“ Who gave you that watch you wear? You told me it was a chronometer,—a good one.”

“ No one gave it to me; I bought it.”

"You put no value on it, then, beyond the money you gave for it?"

"None. It is yours if you will do me the honour to accept it."

"I will, sir."

He took it nobly, and I hope is wearing it to this day.

What a fine accomplishment is walking!

I admired myself as I stepped out.

I had dawdled away a good deal of time in the South,—doing little more than set up such birds as I shot for a little local museum, and making careful drawings of such fish and insects as I could get at that time of year.

But now I longed for my native country. Everything seemed changed. There was no reason why I should not return,—every reason why I should.

Anna and Katharina had written many times and had expressed the most kindly solicitude, and they amused me with accounts of what they were about. They were installed and reigning in the houses. Most of the ladies had made astonishing and most ridiculous mistakes at first; that was because they had not given their whole intelligence and interest to the problems before them.

Anna and Katharina had now done so, as it appeared. They had studied these household matters, and got the better of them. They could now be thoroughly their old selves. They seemed to have subdued their work to their hands, and they did it far better than servants ever can.

High praise, this. They said, moreover, that they were happy; for Godfrey was settled, and they were together. I did not tell them of my intended return, or anything about my visit to the old doctor.

It was about the middle of April when, after a prosperous voyage, I saw the roof of my own house again. It looked very comfortable. I spare my readers the joy and congratulations of my good housekeeper.

I meant to go to London the next day, but there was no good train till noon; so, in the mean time, I walked out toward the now deserted house which had so long been Katharina's home.

And lo! it was by no means deserted. I saw some people drawing up blinds. It had evidently been let. So I did not approach the windows closely, but turned away into a little lawn before spoken of,—a little lawn at the

edge of the wood, where were always one or more fallen trees, and where silver-birches leaned out their slender trunks toward the light. There Katharina and her sisters in their childhood had loved to play. It was here that she had made me the offer. Sweet thing, how often I had teased her about it! And there, in that very same place, a newly felled tree was lying.

I went and sat down on it, and I took off my hat and gave thanks.

Well,—and then, so inconsistent is man, that I began to blame myself for having fled from England; and I almost reached the point of wishing that I had written to her, and got (who could be sure I might not?) some word of affection—perhaps of hope—in reply, as my old self. And next I felt what a fool I was; and all on a sudden a little crackling noise close at hand made me turn, and in an instant a girlish figure came darting out of the shrubbery and ran into my arms.

Katharina!

She could not check herself; but yet, as the strange man starting up received her in his arms, she saw who it was. Her momentary air of consternation vanished. I beheld again the beautiful blush, so rare on her face, and

before either of us spoke the first kiss had been given and returned.

And then Katharina drew back and gazed at me. She was naturally astonished to meet me there, for I had given her no notice of my intended return. It warmed my heart to find her delighted and agitated. First she was a good deal out of countenance; then she wept a little.

And I—well, I got her to sit by me on the tree-trunk, and felt as much as she did that our parting had not promised any such meeting. The manner of it had taken us both unawares; and, her surprise being not yet over, she heaved up a little sob, and said, “I was sometimes afraid, dear Jack, that we should never see you again.”

“So you thought of me?”

“You know we did. Were you lonely when you were ill?”

“Very. And so you thought of me,—a poor limping fellow?”

Katharina looked up. I was holding one of her hands rather tightly clasped in mine; I did not feel able or willing to give it up. She looked at me, as I said, and then she looked round. I felt, as clearly as if she had said it,

that she remembered where we were. Her bosom heaved ; her fair cheek mustered colour. She had quickly recovered after her tears. She now drew her hand away, and sat a minute or two looking rather shy — rather demure.

And then our eyes met again. I know not what mine expressed, but in hers was shining a certain tender defiance, a sweet audacity. She put her hand through my arm ; and, as if she would not look at me longer, she leaned her forehead against my sleeve and laughed and said, “If he thinks I shall ever *do it again* he never was more mistaken in his life.”

No ! *I did it that time* — I mean I made the offer, — with some of the thankfulness for my position and the reverence for her womanhood that I felt.

Enough to say that it was not declined ; and we sat a little longer under the sweet April sky, among budding leaves, and with tufts of prim-roses and violets and wood-anemones at our feet.

She told me she had come from London to stay a few days in her former home with some old friends who had taken the house, and I began to feel that I had something difficult to tell her.

I declare I was half frightened, and broke into the subject pell-mell.

"And I wanted to speak — as to that limp,
Katharina!"

Her answer might have been addressed to the tree-stump opposite, for she looked only at it. "I thought it was agreed long ago that he did not limp *worth mentioning*." So then, as she had made reference to Another, he had to be discussed; after which, if I had intended to be jealous, I might have found it difficult.

But that came to pass which I had foreseen. When this sweet and precious creature heard the great news she felt as if she had been cheated. I knew she felt that she had been very easily won. I ought to have let her know at first, she said; and I perceived that, if it had been so, matters would have been different.

So, then, I administered as much of that impassioned flattery of the affections as I had at command; and by degrees Katharina graciously forgave me, as I told her, for not being quite such a bad match for her as she had expected.

"You wished to be very generous and make a great sacrifice," I said, when she had let me take her hand again, and when her smiles had begun to peep out at all the corners of her eyes and mouth.

"No, Jack," she answered in a deprecating tone, "but — it was not fair of you!"

"Every one would have said, 'How noble of her to marry that limping cousin just because he has been in love with her all her life!' You would have liked that!"

"No, Jack," she repeated; and she looked demure.

"Did you never suspect, then, that you had the lame man's heart? Did not you generously decide to accept his hand?"

"Generously? No. But when you went away, Anna said she was almost sure that you loved me; and almost directly I began to love you too. I could not help it."

"This is the most delightful news I was ever told in my life. You believed Anna fully, of course?"

"I hoped it was true; and I thought" —

"What a sweet creature you are, Katharina, — and I had no notion you were so handsome! You thought what?"

I was standing before her.

"If I tell you, it is only to let you see how much I perceive that you are different. I am grateful, of course, very grateful; but you will have now to make me love you as your new self."

"I promise to try; but you thought?"

"Oh, I thought — but I changed my mind the moment I saw you. I thought, if it was necessary, I might perhaps do it again."

I never pledged myself to chronicle everything,— all the little incidents of this delightful morning. Suffice it to say that I received that last speech in a natural and proper manner.

And now what more?

Am I expected to relate the experiments made in those houses? I think not, my dear readers. I think I shall here bring my first book to a conclusion. The second will be better, more sensible, and more amusing, for Katharina will help me to write it; and if she makes you laugh as much as she has made me laugh over their acts and deeds, their work and their mistakes, their triumphs and their contentment in the said houses, you will be secure of at least one joyous day.

Adieu.

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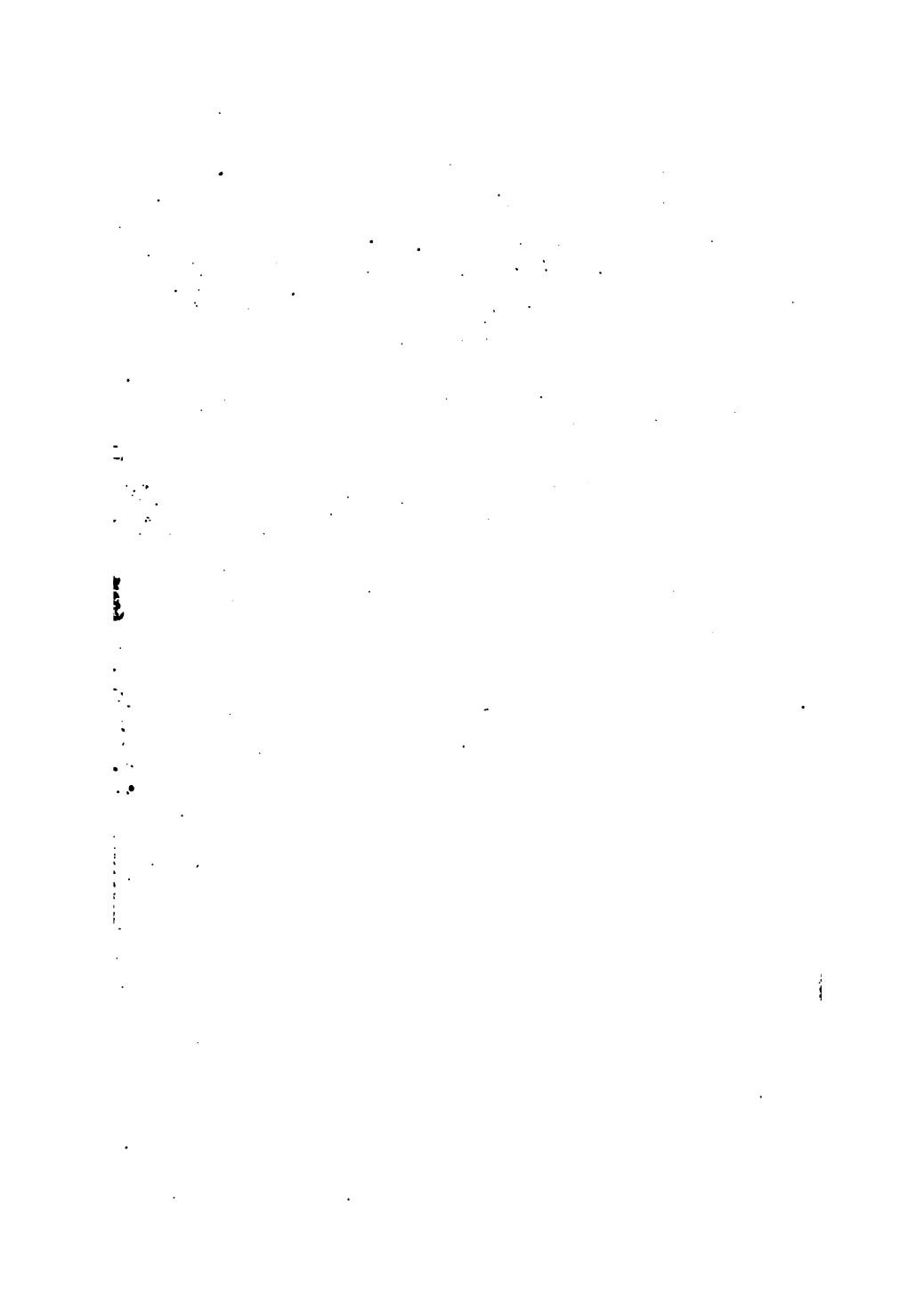
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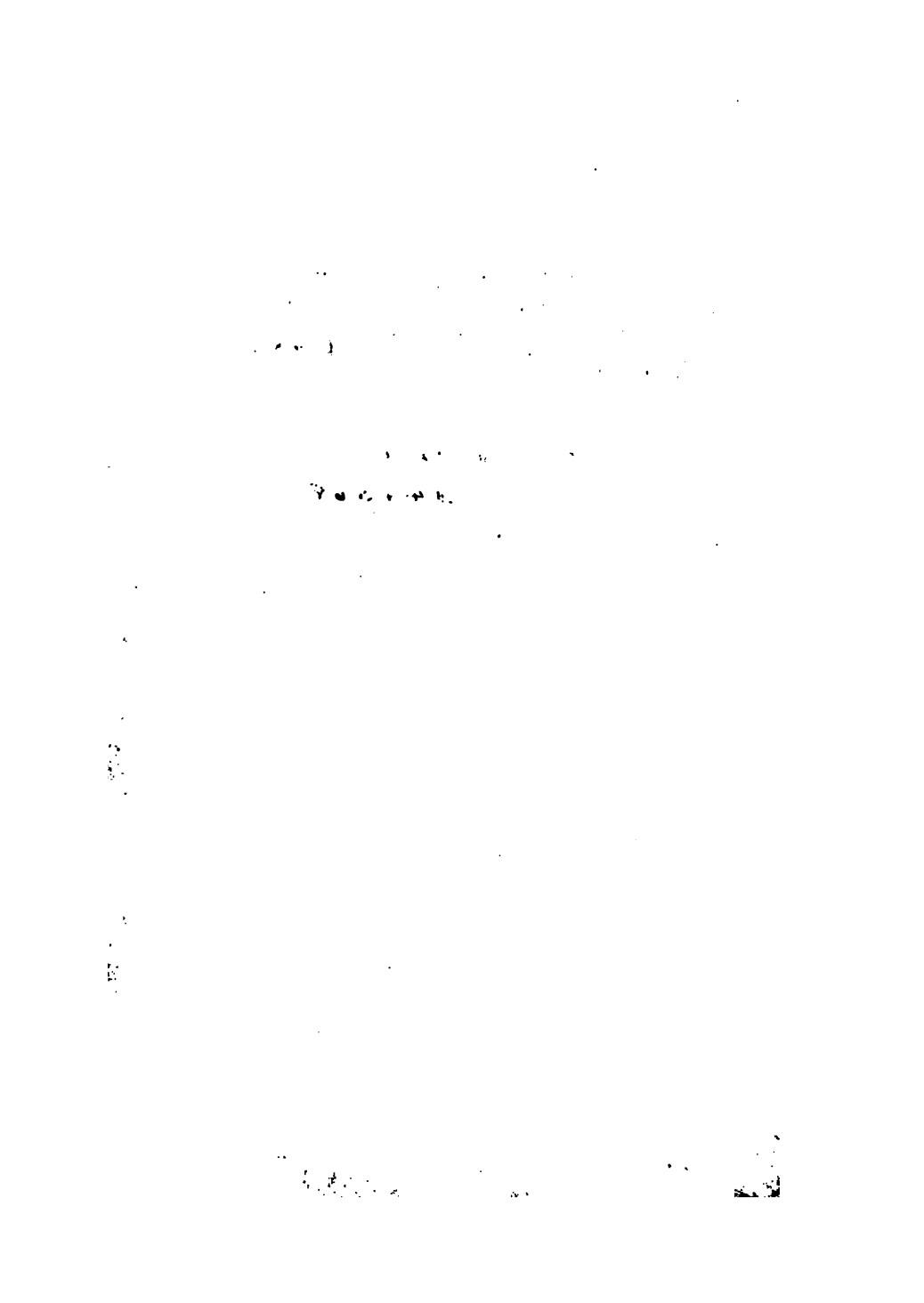
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